MAXIMUM ROCKNROLL

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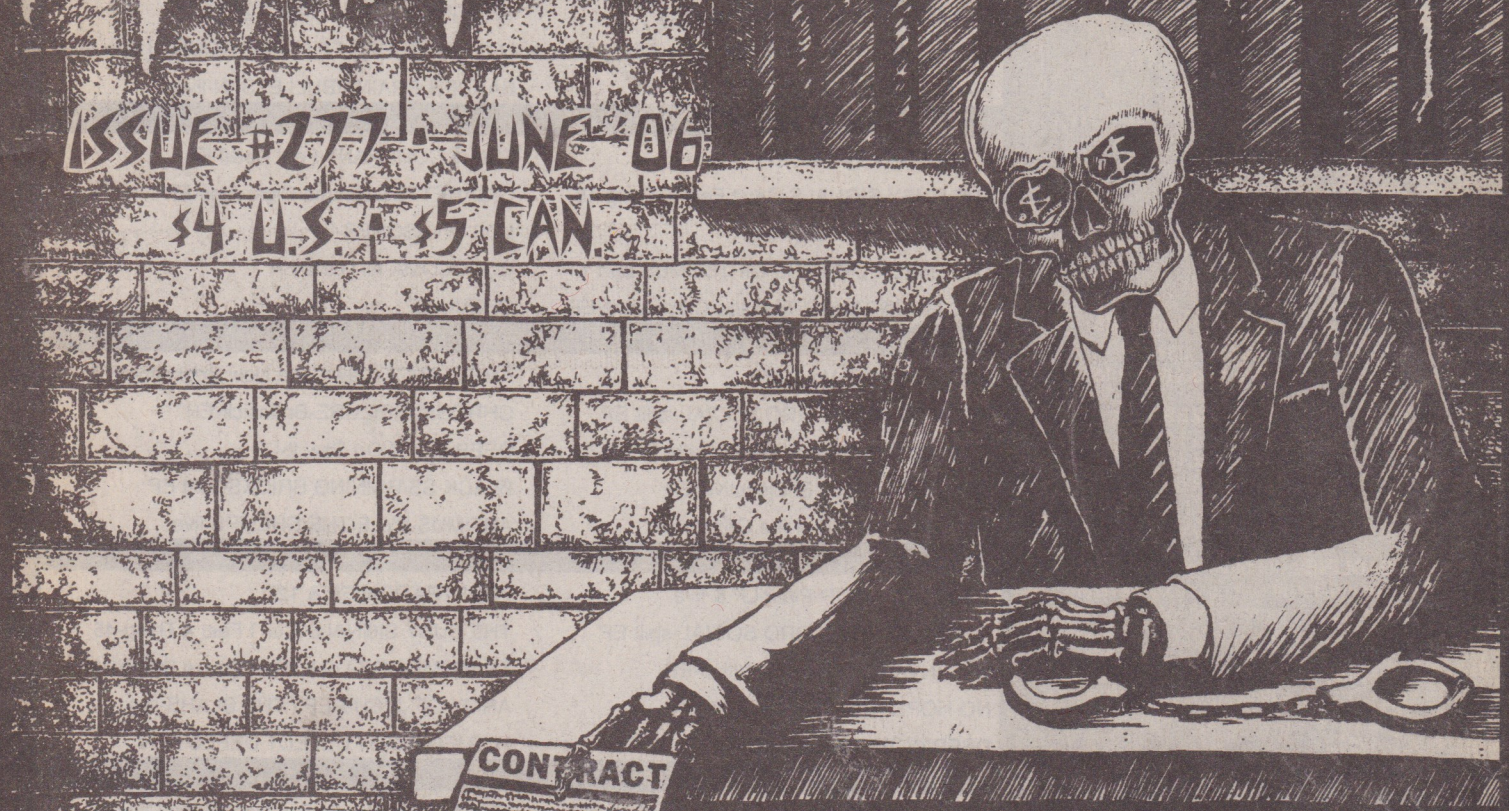

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BACK ISSUES AVAILABLE:
#148, 150-151, 153-154, 156 pts. 1 & 2, 160-163, 166, 172, 174-175, 179-181, 184-210, 214-227, 229-236, 238-276
See page 4 for pricing and other info.

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TOP 10

For what it's worth, here's some of the MRR reviewers' current Top 10 (or so) things we've reviewed this month.

TIM BROOKS

- BORN DEAD/PELIGRO SOCIAL-split EP
- ARMY OF JESUS-By the Deed-EP
- FRANTIC-Attaque of the Grizzlie-LP
- TRANZMITORS-Look What You're Doing-45
- V/A-No Bullshit: Vol. 1-EP
- THE UNCURBED FAMILY-LP
- THE DREAM IS DEAD-Hail the New Pawn-LP
- CRETINS-Samin in Darm-12"
- LOS INVASORES-EP / DEEP WOUND-I Saw It-LP
- BAADER BRAINS/BULLETS IN-live

MITCH CARDWELL

- FRUSTRATION-Wait-EP
- THE BUSY SIGNALS-Can't Feel a Thing-45
- DEEP WOUND-I Saw It-LP
- THE BLACK LIPS/THE DIRTBOMBS-split EP
- CPC GANGBANGS-Teenage Crimewave-EP
- FULLY COHERANT-Feel Dead-EP
- CIGARETTES-Gimme Cigarettes-EP
- LOS INVASORES-EP
- COCOCOMA-All I Give-EP
- CHEVU-EP

ROB COONS

- V/A-No Bullshit: Vol. 1-EP
- BORN DEAD/PELIGRO SOCIAL-split EP
- TRANZMITORS-Look What You're Doing-45
- LOS INVASORES-El Ejecutivo-EP
- FRANTIC-Attaque of the Grizzlie-LP
- AMBULANCE-Dawn of a New Beginning-EP
- CHRONIC SEIZURE-Brainsick-EP
- DEEP WOUND-I Saw It-LP
- BLACK SS/RAINING BRICKS-split EP
- ARTIMUS PYLE/THE SHEMPS-live

PAUL CURRAN

- FOURTH ROTOR-Plain-LP & live
- BORN DEAD/PELIGRO SOCIAL-split EP
- LOS INVASORES-El Ejecutivo-EP
- NO HOPE FOR THE KIDS-45
- DEEP WOUND-I Saw It-LP
- FRUSTRATION-EP & 12"
- THE BUSY SIGNALS-Can't Feel a Thing-45
- TRANZMITORS-Look What You're Doing-45
- ARMY OF JESUS-EP / THE BLAHS-live
- I OBJECT!-live / DEFECT DEFECT-live

JONATHAN FLOYD

- THE MEASURE (SA)-Historical Fiction-LP
- THE BUSY SIGNALS-Can't Feel a Thing-45
- V/A-No Bullshit: Vol. 1-EP
- FRANTIC-Attaque of the Grizzlie-LP
- NEW BRUISES-CD
- THE LITTLE KILLERS-A Real Good One-CD
- NO HOPE FOR THE KIDS-45
- THE SAINTE CATHERINES-CD
- CPC GANGBANGS-Teenage Crimewave-EP
- SHEMPS-live

CHRIS HUBBARD

- THE HELL-Typical Shit-EP
- STRACONY/VIA MEDIA-split LP
- NO HOPE FOR THE KIDS-45
- V/A-No Bullshit: Vol. 1-EP
- TRANZMITORS-Look What You're Doing-45
- THE BUSY SIGNALS-Can't Feel a Thing-45
- FRUSTRATION-Wait-EP
- LOS INVASORES-El Ejecutivo-EP
- GODING'S SAWED OFF/SICK AND TIRED-split EP
- V/A-KC-DIY-LP / EXTORTION-EP

KENNY KAOS

- THE BUSY SIGNALS-Can't Feel a Thing-45
- THE KNOCKOUTS-D Zug-EP
- COCOCOMA-All I Give-EP
- TRANZMITORS-Look What You're Doing-45
- BUZZCOCKS-Flat-Pack Philosophy-LP
- CIGARETTES-Gimme Cigarettes-EP
- THE BLACK LIPS/THE DIRTBOMBS-split EP
- BULLET TREATMENT-Dead Are Walking-EP
- LOS INVASORES-El Ejecutivo-EP
- Frank Portman-King Dork-book

CAROLYN KEDDY

- THE BLACK LIPS/THE DIRTBOMBS-split 45
- THE LITTLE KILLERS-A Real Good One-CD
- TRANZMITORS-Look What You're Doing-45
- MONEYCHANGERS-Making Friends with...-EP
- COCOCOMA-EP / FRANTIC-LP
- LOS INVASORES-El Ejecutivo-EP
- CIGARETTES-Gimme Cigarettes-EP
- FRUSTRATION-Wait-EP
- HEADACHE CITY / THE PETS-live
- TIMES NEW VIKING-live

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TOP 10

Please send two copies of vinyl or CD-only releases to the address on the previous page. See Demos section for where to send tapes & CD-Rs.

WILL KINSER

STRACONY/VIA MEDIA-split LP	BILL BONDSMEN-Lungs Seize-EP
CRETINS-12" / PELIGRO SOCIAL-split EP	THE EU'S ARSE-Adesso Come Allora...-CD
BESTHÖVEN-A Lei do Mais Fraco-LP	MASS GRAVE/LIMB FROM LIMB/STORMCROW-live
DEEP WOUND-LP / LOS INVASORES-EP	SUBHUMANS/WORLD INFERNO-live
THE UNCURBED FAMILY-LP	DEADFALL/SAHN MAHRUE/BRUTAL KNIGHTS-live

RAY LUJAN

NO HOPE FOR THE KIDS-45	DEFLATOR MOUSE-The New One-CD
BUZZCOCKS-LP / THE RETURNABLES-CD	COCOCOMA-EP / TRANZMITORS-45
THE MEASURE (SA)-Historical Fiction-LP	LOVE EQUALS DEATH-Nightmerica-CD
BEOWULF-The Re-Releases-CD	PUT-ONS-Schooldays in Disgrace-CD
THE BUSY SIGNALS-45 / FRUSTRATION-EP	ISOBEL-Something Better-EP

ALLAN MCNAUGHTON

TRANZMITORS-Look What You're Doing-45	FRUSTRATION-EP / THE HELL-Typical Shit-EP
LOS INVASORES-El Ejecutivo-EP	DEEP WOUND-I Saw It-LP
CHRONIC SEIZURE-Brainsick-EP	BUZZCOCKS-LP / V/A-No Bullshit: Vol. 1-EP
ARMY OF JESUS-By the Deed-EP	WHISKEY SUNDAY-Maldecido-LP
BORN/DEAD / PELIGRO SOCIAL-split EP	V/A-KC DIY-LP

GOLNAR NIKPOUR

BORN/DEAD / PELIGRO SOCIAL-split EP	FRUSTRATION-EP & 12" / FOURTH ROTOR-LP
LOS INVASORES-EP / DEEP WOUND-LP	NO HOPE FOR THE KIDS-45
FRANTIC-Attaque of the Grizzlie-LP	BUZZCOCKS-Flat-Pack Philosophy-LP
V/A-No Bullshit: Vol. 1-EP	GORILLA ANGREB-live
BLACK LIPS/DIRTBOMBS-split EP	FIRMEZA 10/HUMAN BASTARD-live

DONNA POOLE

DEEP WOUND-I Saw It-LP	BUZZCOCKS-Flat-Pack Philosophy-LP
FRUSTRATION-Wait-EP	BORN DEAD/PELIGRO SOCIAL-split EP
V/A-KC DIY-LP	ED BRIGADE/SUMO-split EP
FRANTIC-Attaque of the Grizzlie-LP	NO HOPE FOR THE KIDS-45
CRETINS-Samin in Darm-12"	THE BUSY SIGNALS-Can't Feel a Thing-45

BRUCE ROEHRS

ARMY OF JESUS-By the Deed-EP	BLACK SS/RAINING BRICKS-split EP
AMBULANCE-Dawn of a New Beginning-EP	V/A-No Bullshit: Vol. 1-EP
FOR THE WORSE-Couldn't Give Two Shits...-LP	BORN DEAD/PELIGRO SOCIAL-split EP
NAZI DOGS-Chase the Man-CD	DEEP WOUND-LP / CHRONIC SEIZURE-EP
BEOWULF-The Re-Releases-CD	46 SHORT-Truth Denied-CD

RYAN WELLS

BILL BONDSMEN-Lungs Seize-EP	V/A-No Bullshit: Vol. 1-EP
THE BLACK LIPS/THE DIRTBOMBS-split EP	THE BUSY SIGNALS-Can't Feel a Thing-45
FRUSTRATION-Wait-EP	CHRONIC SEIZURE-Brainsick-EP
LOS INVASORES-El Ejecutivo-EP	FRANTIC-Attaque of the Grizzlie-LP
V/A-Messthetics Greatest Hits-CD	NO HOPE FOR THE KIDS-45

ZINE TOP TEN

Bald Cactus #24	Tazwell's Favorite Eccentric #3
Fat is Beautiful #1	Trust #116
Green Anarchy #22	Total Destruction #1
Loserdom #14	Zine Workshop #1
Renfield #145	Zoom Doom #2

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A WHOLE CRAPLOAD OF MRR BACK ISSUES...

#150/Nov '95. NY Loose, Snap-Her, Sick Boys, Splatterheads, Pipe, Pregnant Man, Final Conflict, Rawness, Stink, Goblins, Smellie Fingers.

#151/Dec '95. Lowdowns, My White Bread Mom, Queen B's, Electric Frankenstein, Turtlehead, Serpico, Trick Babys, In/Humanity, Stains, Varukers, Pist, Terrible Virtue.

#153/Feb '96. Snort, Hatchetface, Little Ugly Girls, ADZ, Oxymoron, NOTA, Stun Guns, Surfin' Turnips, Gutfiddle, Karen Monster, Dimestore Haloes.

#154/Mar '96. Motards, Subincision, Stisism, Donnas, Stallions, Count Backwards.

#156 pt 1/May '96. Public Toys, Crunch, Peter & The Test Tube Babies, Nails Of Hawaiian, Splash 4, Yawp!, Lifetime, Sickoids.

#156 pt 2/May '96. Australian Special: Beanflipper, Melancholy, Blitz Babiez, Crank, SubRosa, Mindsnare, TMT, H-Block, B-Sides, Fallout, Frenzal Rhomb, Lawnsmell, One Inch Punch, Chickenshit, No Deal.

#160/Sept '96. Automatics, Boycot, Toast, Morning Shakes, Mormons, John Q. Public, Sex Offenders, Ballgagger, Business, Apocalypse Babys, Good Riddance.

#161/Oct '96. Jet Bumpers, Steel Miners, Divisia, Lopo Drido, Red #9, Nothing Cool, Sink, Sires, Newtown Grunts.

#162/Nov '96. Phantom Surfers, Candy Snatchers, the Stain, National Guard, Torches To Rome, Restos Fosiles, Two Bo's Maniacs, Snuka, Redemtion 87, Torture Kitty.

#163/Dec '96. Last Sons of Krypton, Prostitutes, Wig Hat, Boys, Let It Rock, Enemy Soil, Vulcaneers, Half Empty, Zeros, Deadcats, Teen Idles.

#166/Mar '97. Walking Abortions, Hickey, '77 Spreads, Sanity Assassins, Cards In Spokes, Joey Tampon & The Toxic Shocks, Adjective Noun, Suicide King, Lenguas Armadas, Trauma, De Crew.

#170/July '97. Tedio Boys, Mine, The Four Cockroaches, Meanwhile, Broken, (Young) Pioneers, Hood Rat, Bristle, The Slits. Scene reports: West Canada, France, Indonesia.

#174/Nov '97. Stratford Mercenaries, Lickity Split, Bladder, Piss Shivers, Barnhills, In/Humanity, Education theme issue.

#175/Dec '97. One Man Army, Those Unknown, Boiling Man, Piao Chong, Exploding Crustaceans, Last Year's Youth, Heartdrops, Dirty Burds, Dimestore Haloes.

#179/April '98. Boy Sets Fire, Tres Kids, Idyls, Spat & The Guttersnipes, The Posers, Explosive Kate, Douche Flag.

#180/May '98. Reinforce, Discontent, TV Killers, Slack Action, Eyeliners, Mademoiselle, MK Ultraviolence, Haulin' Ass, 97a, Infiltrators, Jack Saints, Stray Bullets.

#181/June '98. Grapefruit, Druggies, DDI, Bonecrusher, Normals, All Bets Off, Stiletto Boys, Summerjack, Cell Block 5.

#184/Sept '98. Absentees, Devoid of Faith, UXA, Umlaut, Four Letter Word, Streetwalkin' Cheetahs, Ricanstruction, Libertine, Indecision, Snarkout Boys.

#185/Oct '98. Traitors, Wimpy Dicks, Armed & Hammered, Dylan McKays, NME, Tezacrifco, Worm, Roswells, Raxola, Beatnik Termites.

#186/Nov '98. Registrators, August Spies, Marilyn's Vitamins, Chinese Love Beads.

#187/Dec '98. Real Kids, Sawn Off, Cretins, Spider Cunts, Heroines, 3rd Party, No Class.

#188/Jan '99. Stitches, Neighbors, Mansfields, Real Swinger, Marauders, Mark Bruback, Mars Moles, DOA.

#189/Feb '99. Monster X, Peter & the Test Tube Babies, Steam Pig, Maurauders, Yakuza, Dead Beat, Halfways, Hot Rod Honeys, DeRita Sisters.

#190/Mar '99. John Holstrom, Powerhouse, Brezhnev, Slappy, Black Pumpkin, Smartbomb ca, Wanda Chrome, Long Gones, Smogtown, Halfways, Tilt.

#191/April '99. Murder Suicide Pact, Kil Kare, Dudman, Super Hi-Fives, Better Than Elvis DJs, Pet Peeves, Loose Ends, Slingshot Episode.

#192/May '99. Los Crudos, Burning Kitchen, Henry Fiat's Open Sore, Polythene, Kangaroo Recs.

#193/June '99. Munster Recs, DS-13, Safety Pins, Pussycats, Piolines, False Alarm, Darlington, Bad Stain, Bodies, Houseboy, Mullets.

#194/July '99. Deathreat, Last Match, God Hates Computers, Fokkewolf, Flesh Eating Creeps, Aside, Hoppin' Mad, Kid Dynamite, Thee Outcasts.

#195/Aug '99. Moral Crux, RC5, Have Nots, Ill Tempered, Dysentery, Greg Higgins, Revlons, Larry & the Gonowheres..

#196/Sept '99. Hopscotch, Catharsis, Orchid, The Pricks, Grissle, Product X, Reaching Forward, Emerge, Third Degree, "Epicenter Zone '90-'99".

#197/Oct '99. Reducers SF, Lower Class Brats, Reactor 7, TheGodsHateKansas, Futuro Incierto, Showcase Showdown, Waifle, Flat Earth Recs.

#198/Nov '99. Hail Mary, Pressure Point, Bump 'N Uglies, The Victims, A//Political, Outlast

#199/Dec '99. Locust, Ratos de Porao, USV, Razlog Za, G-3, Swarm, WHN?, Mt. St. Helens, Black Cat Music, Enemy Soil.

#200/Jan '00. American Steel, Curse, Gee Vaucher, Hers Never Existed, Aaron Cometbus, Active distro, Toxic Narcotic, MRR catalogue #100-200.

#201/Feb '00. Beerzone, Towards An End, Daybreak, "Best Punk Singles of the '90s," the WTO riots in Seattle.

#202/March '00. KTMWQ, Real Estate Fraud, Strike Out, Broken Rekids, the Haggard, GC5, Gore Gore Girls, the Catheters.

#203/April '00. Spazz, Slang, *Slug & Lettuce* zine, *Suburban Voice* zine, As We Once Were, Red Angel Dragnet, Four Letter Words, Slampt Records, the Wednesdays, the Fuses.

#204/May '00. Cocksparrer, Talk Is Poison, Red Scare, Put Downs, Out Cold, Geraldine, Michael Knight, CBGaV, Pillage People.

#205/June '00. Punks With Kids special. Skudz, 50 Million, Legion, Wilbur Cobb, Coalition.

#206/July '00. Drunk, ESL, Ambition Mission, Lord High Fixers, Cripple Bastards, Dig Dug, Federation X, Amulet, Valentine Killers.

#207/Aug '00. Harum Scarum, Raw Power, Unseen, Pekinska Patka, Hudson Falcons, Dementia 13, Confine, Allergic to Whores.

#208/Sept '00. Le Shok, the Commies, the Chemo Kids, Day of Mourning, Affront, Diaspora, Whippersnapper, Hopeless/Sub City, Prank, Countdown to Oblivion

#209/Oct '00. Loose Lips, Godstomper, Peace of Mind, FYP, I Farm, Annalise, Cattle Decapitation, Riot/Clone.

#210/Nov '00. J Church, Profane Existence, Pezz, Pre-Teens, Templars, This Machine Kills, Subtonix, OB.

#214/Mar '01. Crispus Attucks, Fetish, Lifes Halt, Mr. Roboto, Dream Dates, Satan McNugget, Havoc, Briefs.

#215/April '01. No Means No, Vitamin X, Injections, Y, Dils, Last In Line, Don Austin, Deranged Records

#216/May '01. Propagandhi, Angelic Upstarts, Discordance Axis, Ruination, Photographer: Chris Boarts, Strap-Ons, Lynnards Innards

#217/June '01. Joey Ramone R.I.P., Tear It Up, Skitsystem, The Pattern, CrimethInc., Esperanza, The Chicago Blackout, Photographer: Ace

#218/July '01. Guyana Punchline, Les Sexareenos, The Devil Is Electric, Red Monkey, White Collar Crime, Forca Macabra, The Ataris, Suicide, The Mob

#220/Sep '01. Latin American Issue. Aubuso Sonoro, Anti-Todo, Fuerza X, Apatia No, Manganzoids, Demencia, Sick Terror, Tocatta y Bulla, NTN, Argies, Reconcile, Anti-Korpus, Ruido De Odio, Los Pepiniyos, Rebelion Disidente, Brazil Scum , Kim Bae Photo Essay.

#221/Oct '01. Tales from the G8 Summit, Reflections, Soophie Nun Squad, Totalitär, True North, Wontons, Sin Dios, Bottles & Skulls, Scarred For Life, Flowers in the Dustbin pt. 2, Remains of the Day, Ritchie Whites, B'67.

#222/Nov '01. Dios Hastio, Tragedy, Four Letter Word, *Salad Days* author Charles Romalotti, Very Metal, Maurice's Little Bastards, the Rotters, MDC Brazilian tour diary, the Cravats, JR Ewing, Dutch scene report, extended news section, "Globalization Rhetoric & Reality,"

#223/Dec '01. "US Policy in the Middle East," "Revisiting 1948," Manifesto Jukebox, Good Riddance, Pokers, Viimenen Kolonna, Blueblоods, Vitamin X tour diary, Flakes, Pg. 99, the Mob, 7 Days of Samsara.

#224/Jan '02. "Legislation Since Sept. 11," Rendencion 9.11, Metro Youth, Severed Head of State, Piranhas, Paraf, Backstabbers, Inc, An Albatross, Citizen Fish Tour, SPAM Records, the Virus, Action Time.

#225/Feb '02. Lengua Armada, Breaker Breaker, 3 Yrs. Down, Scrotum Grinder, Turun Tauti, Flux Of Pink Indians, Holding On, Pauki, 86'd, See You In Hell, Red Light Sting, Nazis From Mars, Scare Tactic.

#226/Mar '02. Queer punk special issue. Vaseline, Quails, Skinjobs, Italian queer punk report, Vaginal Davis, Feelings on a Grid, Sissies, Scott Free, Dumba, Columns.

#227/Apr '02. Bellrays, Rhinos, Wasted, Kristofer Pasanen, Business, Assert, DS 13 tour report, Life Set Struggle, Iowaska, Zounds.

#229/June '02. Countdown To Putsch, The Awakening, Dave Hill Distribution, Holier Than Thou, Kill Devil Hills, Sound Of Failure, E.T.A., Nubs, Les Baton Rouge, New Disorder Records, Career Suicide, Swellbellys, The Sinyx.

#230/July '02. Bitchin', Redencion 911, Phantom Limbs, Secretions, Holy Molar, Sharp Knife, Mighty John Waynes, A Global Threat, Groovie Ghoulies, Reproach, Annie Anxiety.

#231/Aug '02. Epoxies, Puppy Vs. Dyslexia, Koro, Blocko, Amdi Petersen's Armé, Piss & Vinegar Zine, Schizophrenic Records, Toys That Kill, Give Us Barabbas, Dirt.

#232/Sept '02. "No Future" article, Lost, Fartz, Sell Outs, Razors Edge, Stakeout, Dillinger Four, All or Nothing HC, Fleshies, Bridge Nine Records, Akashic Books, Liberty.

#233/Oct '02. "All Ages" article, Scholastic Deth, Runnamucks, Sinners & Saints, Panic, Gasolheads, Jewws, Futures, Michael Landon's Commandos, Storm the Tower, Against Me!, Balance of Terror, Class Assassins, Spazm 151.

#234/Nov '02. Snobs, What Happens Next? Brazilian tour, The Oath, Radio 4, Feederz, Charm City Suicides, Selfish, Riot 99, End On End, Peawees, Born/Dead.

#235/Dec '02. Anti-war Special Issue. Articles: "Reading for Democracy," "War on Iraq?" "Unfinished American Revolution," Resource Guide, "US Involvement in Iraq,""Axis of Empire." Long Island DIY Scene, What Happens Next? Brazilian tour part 2, Smalltown, Kylesa, Crash & Burn.

#236/Jan '03. Mr. California & State Police, Iron Lung, Riff Randells, Chainsaw, *Artcore*, Latterman, Travis Cut, Phenomenauts, Pretty Little Flower, X-Cretas.

#238/Mar '03. World Burns To Death, Chronics, Vilently Ill, Dystopia, Pilger, Exotic Fever, Brezhnev, R.A.M.B.O., Blown To Bits, Put To Shame, Deconditioned, This Bike Is A Pipe Bomb, Monsters.

#239/Apr '03. Romanian D-beat, Meconium Records, Amazombies, Abandoned Hearts Club, Mike V. & the Rats, Nicki Sicki, Bigamists, Bolivia article, Negatives, Kuolema, Defiance.

#240/May '03. I Quit, Apers, Headless Horsemen, Lesser of Two, Barse, Nightmare, Music Zine Roundtable, Exploding Hearts, Flesh Packs, Blacklist Brigade.

#241/June '03. Tyrades, Lumbergh, The Stand By Me, New Mexican Disaster Squad, Cut the Shit, Libertinagem, 17th Class, the Ends, He Who Corrupts, Deathbag, Cria Cuervos.

#242/July '03. Pensacola and San Francisco punk protest reports, John Wilkes Booze, Anfo, Bob Suren, Migra Violenta, Jackson 8, *Snakepit* zine, Krigshot, the Rites, Deadfall.

#243/Aug '03. "Media Alliance and the FCC," Striking Distance, Malcontents, Invisible City, Books Lie, Charm City Art Space, Hopeless Dregs of Humanity, I Shot Cyrus, Sunday Morning Einsteins, What the Kids Want, Onion Flavored Rings.

#244/Sept '03. None More Black, Deadline, Rai Ko Ris, Boxed In, Exploding Hearts, Raving Mojos, Blackout Terror, Morticia's Lovers, Thee Fine Lines, *Trust* zine.

#245/Oct '03. No Time Left, Riistetyt, Intense Youth, The Gimmies, Ass End Offend, Artimus Pyle, La Fraction, Kung Fu Rick, The Horror.

#246/Nov '03. Punk & Resistance in Israel, Letters from Palestine, No Choice, FM Knives, Bury the Living, Marked Men, The Dirty Burds, Provoked.

#247/Dec '03. DSB, The Boils, Popular Shapes, Phoenix Foundation, Bathtub Shitter, Meet the Virus, Cropknox, "Punk Babies on Tour" Article.

#248/Jan '04. Discharge, Superhelicopter, Jed Whitey, Black Friday '29, Find Him And Kill Him, The Lids, Impratical Cockpit, Face Up To It, History Of Maximum Rocknroll Radio.

#249/Feb '04. From Ashes Rise, Hagar the Womb, This Is My Fist, Skip Jensen, Gride, Katy Otto/Mike Taylor Dialogue, John Yates, Pointing Finger.

#250/Mar '04. Best Records of 2003, Miami FTAA protests, Clorox Girls, FIYA, "La Villita: Chicago Pilsen Scene," Terminus Victor, Restarts, Damage Done, Knights of New Crusade.

#251/April '04. The Fuse!, Väkivaltaa, Modern Machines, Microcosm, Migra Violenta Euro tour diary, Allegiance, Neurotic Swingers, Xavier Lepaige Photos, Le Scrawl,Vrah.

#252/May '04. Fucked Up, Firestarter, Inepsy, Laukaus, Great Clearing Off, Radio Reelers, Extreme Noise Records, 46 Short, The State, John The Baker, Free Verse, Chrystaei Branchaw photos.

#253/June '04. Sweet J.A.P., Gorilla Angreb, Vöetsek, Minority Blues Band, Scruvy Dogs, Molotov Cocktail, Kidnappers, Schifosi, King Ly Chee, YDI.

#254/July '04. No Hope For The Kids, Dropdead, Diskords, Breakfast, Asschapel, I Excuse, Strung Up, To Hell & Back, Four Eyes, Lamant, Gammits MW, scene reports from Portland, Boston and Germany.

#255/Aug '04. "Punk's Not Dead, Reagan Is" Special Issue. Leatherface, Get It Away, The Hatepinks, Keen Monkey Work, New York City, South Dakota, Czech Republic, Philippines, Russia.

#256/Sep '04. The Observers, Witchhunt, Annihilation Time, Zann, Eskapo, FxPxO, Haymarket Riot, Fourth Rotor, Les Georges Lenigrad, Texas scene, Newfoundland, Indiana, England.

#257/Oct '04 The Election Issue, Jesse Townley, Matt Gonzalez, Rattus, Fighting Dogs, Hero Dishonest, Kickz, The Boss Martians, Reactionary Three, Slovakia, Australia, South Wales, South East Asia.

#258/Nov '04. Career Suicide, Cathy Wilkerson of the Weather Underground, No Fucker, The Repos, Dominatrix, Ashtray, Deadstop, Midnight Creeps, Michale Graves, The Diffs, The Shemps, Abi Yo Yo's.

#259/Dec '04. Bad Business, Penelope Houston, Rambo, AI, Ass, I Attack, The Krunchies, A-Lines, Insurgence Records, The Hates, Accidents, Massgrav, The Critics, Merciless Game, SF Hotel Workers Strike, photos from Japan, SoCal & the Bay Area.

#260/Jan '05. Technocracy, The Total End, Only Crime, True North, Partisans, For The Worst, Dick Spikie, Straight to Hell, Black Cross, Action, Ergs, Rusty Nails, Queer Activism in London, Greg Shaw tribute, John Peel tribute, "Andrew "Stig" Sewell tribute, Beijing punk photos.

#261/Feb '05. Year End Top Tens, Riistetyt, Lost Cherrees, Complete Control, Cheap Sex, Gasoline Please, Beerzone, Greyskull, MOTO, Water Into Beer Fanzine, Swe-Punk scumpit, Japan punk photos, Bay Area punk photos, Texas, Russia, and Malaysia scene reports.

#262/March '05. Kärnvapen Attack, Neo Boys, Catholic Boys, Dead Moon, Wreckage, Frantix, Armitage Shanks, Wendy Kroys, To What End?, Cell Block 5, Bent Outta Shape, Ah-Nah Tron, Slovakia, Indonesia, and Illinois scene report

#263/April '05. All Crusties Spending Loud Night 2004, Bombenalarm, Battleship, APA, The Black Lips, Words That Burn, Flamingo 50, The Low Budgets, Mellakka, I Object, Antisect, Bay Area scene report, South Coast UK scene report.

#264/May '05. Crime, Love Songs, Bruce Banner, Intent, The Holy Mountain, Have Heart, The Bill Bondsmen, The Real Losers, archive photos, Bay Area scene photos, Taiwan and Rochester scene reports.

#265/June '05. Endless Nightmare, Hard Skin, Kolokol, Amebix, Transistor Transistor, The Safes, The Detonators, Finland scene report, France scene report, SoCal scene report.

#266/July '05. The Carbonas, MDC, Destrux, Unkind, Hiretsukan, Giant Haystacks, Ohuzaru, Teenage Harlets, Michigan scene report, San Diego scene report, Eugene, OR scene report, photos.

#267/August '05. Knugen Faller, Sleeper Cell, Motorama, Gulcher Records history, Army of Jesus, The Slicks, Thee Merry Widows, Rotten Sound, The Faction (UK), Czech scene report, New Zealand scene report.

#268/September '05. Signal Lost, Gulcher Records history part two, Teenage Bottlerocket, Mattilda (aka Matt Bernstein Sycamore), The Spectacle, Bang Sugar Bang, Chumbawamba, Reason of Insanity, Forward To Death, Flyer art, Florida Scene Report, Bay Area scene report, photos.

#269/October '05. Hammer, Desastre, Human Eye, Les Bellas, Gasmask Terror, Randy "Biscuit" Turner tribute, Stalag 17 (UK), Stepbrothers, Retching Red, Weaving the Deathbag, Gather, Chicago and SoCal scene reports.

#270/November '05. Clorox Girls European Tour, Czolgosz, Regulations, Time Flys, Taxi, No More Lies, Oil!, Paddy Costello of the Dillinger Four, Smartpils, Revenge of Mongoloid, Pisschrist, Scene reports: Puerto Rico, UK, Russia.

#271/December '05. Besthöven, Abductee SD, Tractor Sex Fatality, George Harrison, Deathtoll, Photos by icki, Ice & The Iced, the Ulcers, Chimps Eat Bananas, Deranged / Criminal IQ / Kick'n'Punch Records. Scene reports: Iowa, Maine, Illinois.

#272/January '06. Conga Fury, Let's Grow, Frustration, Bastardass, Icons of Filth, Burial, Hrydjuverk, Cranked Up!, Urrke T & the Midlife Crisis, Tropezio, *Baboon of Sickness* zine. Scene reports: Austin, France, Michigan, Larry Wolfley photos.

#273/February '06. Fuses, Endstand, Out Cold, Pedestrians, Acts of Sedition, BadEatingHabits, Western Addiction, Jesus Fucking Christ, Toxic Waste, Punk photo spread, St. Louis, USA & Brighton, UK scene reports.

#274/March '06. Best of 2005, Formaldehyde Junkies, Brutal Knights, Kansan Uutiset, Hatred Surge, A-Heads, Manikin, Upinatem, Hips, Boston scene report, Punk photo spread.

#275/April '06. History of ABC No Rio (Part One), Ringers, Missbrukarna, '90s garage punk scumpit, Anatomi-71, After the Bombs, Rubella Ballet, RIP Pig Champion, Ricky Adam interview and photographs, Sean McGhee, Hard Skin US tour diary.

#276/May '06. "Is Business Killing Punk Rock?" business survey (Part One), History of ABC No Rio (Part Two), Vitamin X Asian Pacific tour diary, Soviet Valves Suburban Death Machine, Frustrations, George Hurchalla, Scene reports: Czech Republic and Greece.

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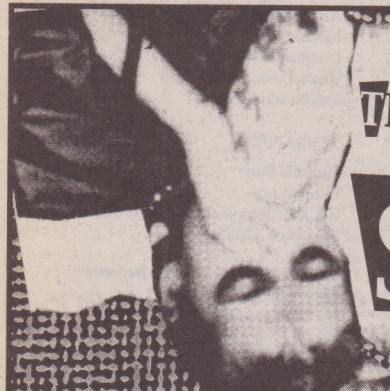

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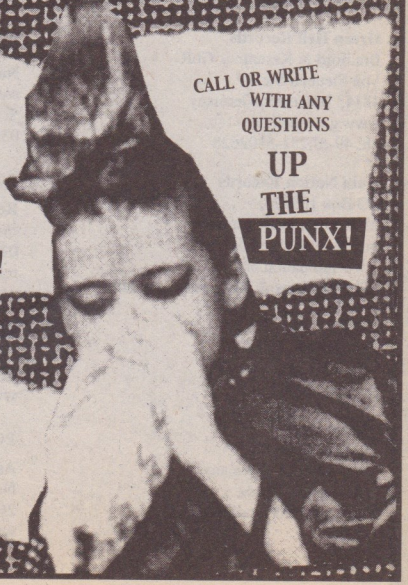

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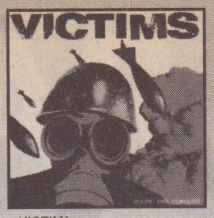

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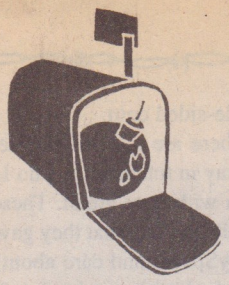

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Dear MRR—

Hello! It's been a very long time since I have felt the urge to write a letter to your fanzine. After reading part one of the ABC No Rio retrospective, there are some things I wanted to add to this since I wasn't asked to contribute to it. First off, it's amazing that the place is still operating in any capacity at all. Many kudos to those guys and gals who are keeping it together and more power to them.

That first crucial year of "hardcore matinees" at ABC No Rio would not have been possible without the efforts of Mike Bullshit and Gavin Van Vlack. Those two were the ones who made the first contacts with the place and got the ball rolling. There was a large group of people, mostly white geeks from NJ and disaffected scenesters from CBGB's, who were looking for a place to go see bands without the problems most places were having at the time. The early ABC No Rio scene was not about politics, it was more about renewal and a new beginning. The place was a total shell of a building. It was the perfect place to start.

I cannot speak for Mike personally of why early on he didn't want to attract the "Squat or Rot" scene to ABC No Rio, but I do have some theories that make sense. Mike was involved in the NYC hardcore/punk scene at that point for years and knew the "general" habits of certain people. The majority of that crowd was more into beer and fashion than actually seeing bands and contributing anything positive to the scene. We were trying to build something and I can't imagine how things would have turned out if that crowd came down that early on. (I saw first-hand what happened afterwards, a couple of years later.) There were a lot of bad feelings from the NYC "punk" scene toward Mike and that decision but he held his ground on it. He also made sure no alcohol was brought into the club. The majority of the folks working to build up the shows at ABC No Rio supported this. We didn't want to attract anybody that might want to shut the place down; the people who were running the building itself were already having too many problems.

From what I remember, I'd only seen the police around there one time and that was at the infamous Poison Idea show, which had to be scheduled on a Thursday night. I was by Mike's side that night helping him with the door and other things since *everybody* wanted to watch the band that night. The cops were like, "Do you guys have a mattress or anything to cover the door to block the sound?" After they left, Mike and I walked across the street to see if we could hear the music. Now I didn't have my hearing aid at the time and, yes, it was *loud*! Basically though, we tried to keep a very low profile and never really had any problems from the police and/or the neighborhood folks.

After Mike moved out to California, we didn't know what would happen next. Luckily, Freddie Alva stepped up and started booking shows. He did a great job but in retrospect it was the beginning of the end for ABC No Rio, in my opinion. The more crusty bands were booked and attracted a crowd that caused a lot of problems inside and outside of the club. At one show (which was in the basement at this point), some brain surgeon though it would be fun to start lighting off fireworks in the pit area. Nobody got hurt, but it could have caused some problems. A few people stopped showing up, not because "the area was bad," but that the club was getting this negative vibe.

For me, the straw that broke the camel's back was the decision to let alcohol inside the ABC No Rio shows. There was a meeting during the week in which this, among other topics, was going to be discussed. Since it was during the week and a very cold NYC night, only six people showed up, myself included. When the topic came up, the "pro" argument was that we needed to try and stop people from drinking out on the street to avoid problems with the police and the neighborhood. Well, duh. That's what we were trying to do from the very beginning. I was the only "con" argument. It was then decided to allow people to bring their alcohol inside. I was so pissed that night I just got up and walked out. I just cared too much about that place to see it go to shit.

Here's what happened afterwards: people were drinking inside and of course *outside*. You had to be careful during a band's set that you didn't fall on your ass after stepping on an empty bottle. I was working the door one day and some punk thought it would be really cool to throw a half-finished bottle into the doorway. There would be people passed out on the sidewalk in front of the club all the time, you couldn't walk in a straight line, but have to step over bodies. They were really "punk" for sure. I think around the beginning of 1992, I stopped going to ABC No Rio on a regular basis (every week) helping out and started just to go "to ABC No Rio shows."

One other thing to note, I never once was approached to buy drugs or really saw any drug dealing going on down there. I mean I could have been just oblivious to it, but you need to realize something. It is *New York City*! There was drug dealing everywhere, not just out on Rivington Street. It was such a common occurrence that I am surprised that people even noted being so freaked out about that in this article. (Yes, I know the crusties were smoking pot out in the backyard…)

I have a lot of great memories of those first two crucial years at ABC No Rio. It was probably my favorite time ever going to shows and taking part in something. I gave a shit. So did people like Bill Florio, Charles Maggio, Mike Bullshit, Christine Boarts, Brett Beach, Chris Razo, Adam Nathanson, Sam McPheeters, Rich Oliver (Trash), Charley Adamac, Joe Martin, Daryl Kahan, John Woods, Keith Huckins, Nick Forte, Justine DeMetrick, Jon Hiltz, Melissa York, Gavin Van Vlack, and so many others from the ABC years of 1989-1991 that froze their asses off nine months out of the year to keep that place going.

In closing, I'm currently working on a book concerning the NYC/NJ hardcore/punk scene from the years 1986-1993 and ABC No Rio is going to be included big time in it. If you have any memories or stories from early ABC No Rio, please email then to me or go to my website: www.hardwaremediaandradio.com

Thanks for reading,

—Dave K.

Grandnagus69@yahoo.com

1990 Pinehurst View Drive

Grayson, GA 30017

MRR—

In reply to [Paul's] answer to Ryan of I Object! in *MRR* #275: I find your arguments why it's hard to prepare a meal for a touring band quite silly. But before I go on storming the gates, some words about myself. I'm 33, being involved in the local scene for the last 12 years now. That includes five years of putting on shows here in Berlin/Germany/Europe and four years of driv-

ing and managing bands touring Europe. (Before you start to question the punk credibility of bands to be managed, that "managing" most of the time means serving as an universal translator for those unfortunate beings that haven't had a chance to learn any other language than their native one that most Americans are. And sometimes making sure everybody gets up in time and leaves in time and arrives in time.) So I've seen both sides of touring, but never found it difficult to prepare some hot food for the bands I put up nor anyone doing the same finding it difficult. So I find your statement that after all the other work it needs to put on a show it's hard to find the time for cooking rather silly since it's common practice here in Europe for the last dunno-how-many centuries. And in Mexico, too, it seems. And from what I heard, even in Canada. Basically everywhere else outside the US. Somewhere on this planet someone is doing it right now. Or at least today. Someone did it yesterday. And someone will be doing it tomorrow. Again and again. And most people actually like doing it. And I'm still talking about cooking for others. But back to your answer. Yes, putting on a show involves finding a place to hold the show, finding places to stay for the bands (which isn't that common in the US as well, I'm told), making flyers and posters and putting them up and so on. But most of this should be done way in advance. On the day of the show all the posters and flyers should be in the local record stores for at least a week, and should have seen at least two other shows earlier that month. The sleeping places should be fixed. On the day of the show there should be nothing left to do than some food for the bands and having some phone numbers ready for whatever can go wrong. So even if I do it completely DIY, as in "if you want to get things done properly than do it yourself," it isn't that much work. Unless I'm disorganized and want to do everything last minute.

And yes, people do have to work and that might take up most of their time and there's nothing left to prepare some food. But then there's still the option of asking others for help. And if I can't find someone who could help me, then the answer to your question, "Would you rather have no show at all than have a show with no meal provided?" should be "Yes." If I can't find a single person with a little dedication to the band and their music, how do I find enough people to come to the show?

And after all, it comes down to how much the band and the show means to me. If I really think the band should be lucky to have a show at all and shouldn't ask for anything else then why doing a show for them anyway? Because obviously that means that I think the band is shit and their music is shit. So again the answer to your question, "Would you rather have no show at all than have a show with no meal provided?" is "Yes." Because if I don't think the band is worth some extra effort then the band isn't worth touring at all. Or it's at least worth someone else putting up their show who appreciates their music more.

So let me finish with some extra notes. It's not my intention to teach you and your readers how to put on a show. I have never toured the US and never will so I actually don't give a fuck. And I don't wanna say that here in Europe everything is perfect. There are a lot of things about touring Europe that don't make sense to me. And I know they won't be changed that soon because they became common practice and are so much easier that way and so on. They should be changed and they could be changed. But I don't think they will. So what I wanted to criticize was you making up some stupid excuses that don't make sense to anyone who ever put on a show and fed the bands. The real reason why it's not happening more is that it became common practice and it's easier that way for those who run the show. Nothing else.
—Andre Preuss
Xdre971X@hotmail.com

MRR—
Hello everyone, I'm Dario from Crema, a beautiful city in Northern Italy. I fancy myself as a "punk historian" and I am writing a book about punk lyrics from the early era, 1980-1990. It is split in two parts, Europe/Asia/Oceania and North/South America. I am collecting most lyrics available right now, but I'm finding difficulty in getting some of them—bands like Dr. Know, Ill Repute, Rhythm Pigs, White Flag, Stupids UK, Zero Boys *Vicious Circle* LP, Doggy Style. I will accept any help I can get, and if someone is interested in the project, please contact me at the following address: danfountain@libero.it
Thanx,
—Dario

Dear MRR—
I appreciated the fact that you guys tackled a stank-ass subject in your last issue, that of "punk businesses." I never got a copy, just got ten minutes to read the thing in the bookstore on Valencia, so I can't comment on that subject, but one subject I thought was nice to see being chewed on was the issue of punks with MySpace accounts.

I talked shit on MySpace for many months, and then suckered out and got an account with the creeps back in August when I was in Boston and had lots of computer library time and little to do. At the urging of a friend I signed up for the shit and realized that, like with many things, the issue is a double-sided coin.

On one hand, there are a lot of people that I've been able to stay in touch with, who I hadn't stayed in touch with over email. These are people I love (despite the fact that they gave me a reason to join MySpace) and care about, and since I move around a lot it's good to be able to stay in contact with them, as opposed to only seeing them every eight months or so when I pass through their town. It's free and I can check the MySpace at the library.

On the other hand, MySpace has many downsides, of course. The downsides I'm thinking of have little to do with the fact that some skeezy Australian right-wing billionaire technically owns it, or that it offers market-research assholes a lot of data-harvesting potential. I could care less. I'm not giving Rupert Murdoch anything but phony information by having a MySpace account. He can lick some balls for all I care, anyway.

My beef with MySpace is much simpler than that—it's the same beef I have with any technology: that people can take it too far and make fools of themselves, mock their own subculture, and ruin their character with it. My beef with MySpace is that it not only potentially breeds narcissism, vanity, and shallowness of character—character traits that America is already drowning in—but that it offers a creepy type of "virtual social life," a chance to live life from a third-person perspective, to be a goddamned voyeur of people they don't know. It's the ultimate phony and fraudulent experience. MySpace offers people the chance to cultivate their own image and pay attention to who's paying attention to them—it's like a grandiose form of phony scenester-ism and vanity at its tallest height. It has amazing potential to make people into assholes and plankton unworthy of life on this planet, and I'm not sorry for my prickishness in saying so.

A person doesn't need to have a MySpace account to be a phony, narcissistic creep, and having a MySpace account doesn't make somebody that way. There are plenty of living, walking testaments to that fact. I know one or two total frauds in the "scene" who refuse to get MySpace accounts out of principle (as if these cretins had any).

Despite my hatred for cell phones, having one doesn't make somebody an asshole. It's when that person interrupts real-life conversations, talks loudly in quiet places with it, drives while talking on it and risks killing someone, and is always on the goddamned thing that they become deserving of a blow to the abdomen with a piece of frozen sausage.

So in other words, the problem in my eyes with certain technologies, MySpace in particular, is not that some sleazy billionaire who's a thousand miles away owns it, or that Big Brother is going to run some goddamned names

on the thing and take somebody to trial for using dirty words. My problem is with the way that some people choose to use it. The potential that it offers the average individual to be a vain, self-loving fuck who's focus is directed on the *completely wrong* issues (like image and popularity) is what creeps me out more than anything else. That's where the real damage to ourselves and our scene can be done.
—Joey Alone

MRR—
People have always said "stay in school." We've heard that so many times from people we might know, movies, and wherever else you might hear something like that. I don't get why people always say that, but don't help a kid to carry out that advice. All my life I've heard "kids are the future." Well, the future isn't looking so bright. I think it's fucked up how the people that run the state always come to our schools and tell us how low our test scores are. They spend so much time criticizing us. Well, you seem to know so fucking much, why don't you help us? They don't know what it's like to be in a public school, they send their kids to private schools. They don't know what it's like to be in a classroom with no heater when it's colder inside than outside. They don't know what it's like to have fucked-up textbooks that now look like old movie scripts. And they don't know what it's like to have to use something that's meant for your ass to blow your nose. They have no idea what any of this feels like, yet they have the nerve to talk shit about how stupid we are. I'm sure there are schools in the Bay Area with way worse conditions than those listed above. It pisses me off that the government spends so much money on shit that's unnecessary, leaving the rest of us to fend for ourselves. A few weeks ago all the teachers at my school agreed to use their own money to buy stamps so they can send our report cards home. Before, they used to just hand them to us to take home, but they were worried that kids wouldn't bring them home, so then their parents wouldn't be able to help them get better grades. Our teachers always do stuff like that, to make it a little bit better. I think that teachers should be treated better than this. I know they can be annoying sometimes, but they bust their asses to improve things. It's ridiculous that they have to use their own money to buy stuff for the classroom. The government doesn't have money for schools, but they surprisingly have money for war and shit like that. Lower income families get pushed to the side when it comes to education. We all know that's fucked up. All men and women created "equally".
—Leona Stewart

Dear MRR—
I'm having someone else write this letter because I can't write or spell worth shit. But I did get my high school diploma. Figure that one out.

My name is Damien, a.k.a. Mad Dog. I'm an avid reader of your zine and I'd like to say thanks for what you're doing for the punk community. Oi! Oi!

I have a funny story I have to share with you that I think everyone will like.

A couple of days ago, me and a friend were listening to some 7"s and drinking some Mattey's and I put on "Nazi Punks Fuck Off" from the Dead Kennedys. My friend freaked and asked where I got it. So I told him Sound Idea Distribution. He asked how to get more shit like that. And of course I said, "*MRR*, dumbass!" And just like a dumbass he said, "What's that?" So, I grabbed your zine and rolled it up, then I hit him in the face with it and said, "That's what it is!" He said, "What?!" So I explained that it's punks, skins, hardcore, chaos, anarchy, and unity all in one. He looked confused. So I gave him your zine and said, "Punk rock…it's a way of life!"

So thanks *MRR* for everything. Keep it punk!

Fuckin' up society one day at a time.
—Mad Dog
310 Olive Ave
Port St. Lucifer,
Floriduh 34952.

Dear MRR—
Long time reader, first time writer. I agree with Karl Bakla—nobody writes in because there's nothing they care about. The letters section was always one of my favorite parts of this zine, but now it's so short—what's that about? I remember letters going on for pages, almost as much as the columns! But I'm currently intoxicated, so that might be an exaggeration. The point is I loved the different perspectives and opinions on issues that actually mattered. What other medium provides that anymore, aside from the Internet? Ah, yes, the cyber battleground of anonymous egocentrism in the form of chat rooms, message boards, blogs, and the dreaded MySpace. Don't even get me started down that road.

But seriously, punk is dead. Nobody likes to hear it, but it is. You know punk is dead when a major snack company uses claymation "punk" with mohawks, liberty spikes, leather and studs, a shitty pop-melodic tune, and even going so far to include "Oi! Oi! Oi!" to sell disgusting packaged cookies. I nearly puked when I saw that. I mean, c'mon, who are they kidding? And who the fuck is Travis Barker? Immediately after being subjected to that awful appropriation, another ad for cell phones being sold to the public by this Barker, who we'll just call Douche Bag. So in this one, Douche Bag is bangin' away at his super awesome drum kit with his radical tattoos and we find out that "back in the day" he had a cell phone (then uninvented, but who cares, right?) and because of that he got to see a "punk" show. Otherwise he would've been a body builder. Yup. You buy phone! Tell 'em Douche Bag sent you.

You know what I say? Let punk die. It's too late to undo the damage, so let's move on. Evolve. For all the energy expended trying to save "punk", something more productive could be accomplished. I think that's what many are now trying to do, with mixed results. Also, I need to emphasize that I'm not saying abandon punk ethics, music or spirit—just the capitalistic construction and illusion which some embrace as punk. Kill it. Burn it. Let it die. The possibilities lie in the ashes.

I'm tired now. My cat is driving me nuts and it's almost 4 a.m. Tomorrow I have to beg my old man to loan me some cash to pay the rent. It sucks getting fired from a fucking porno store for no reason, especially in the middle of the month. Thanks for reading, though—this short letter was actually a much longer dialogue in my mind. More later.

Peace + Oi!
—Skinhead Nick – SHARP
skinhead.nick@gmail.com

P.S. Current album(s) of choice: MANGE – *Disillusioned*: Lovely, sludgy goodness with great grind screaming in your ears. KNIFED/SCIENTIFIC BONG split EP: Rogue Irish zombies roaming the countryside and hungry for your weed-soaked brains or naked angry lads looking to punch you in the face—good hardcore, but seriously, there's no zombies. Finally, PINK FLAMINGOS – *Poppin' Eye Effect* EP: I eat brains to this. Your brains.

Hi MRR—
First off, I want to say *love* MRR. I've been reading it for almost 20 years now—keep up the good work! Secondly, I just read Mattilda's column in the May issue and that shit was funny! The idea of a recently transplanted white male parading around the inner city with an anti-gentrification stencil and a can of spray paint is so rich with irony. I seriously loved the part of the column where it's described how Gay Shame stenciled "gentrifier" on the very bookstore where their meetings are held—hilarious! Nice to know that some things never change. There'll always be some self-righteous person in the pages of *MRR* claiming that someone's not vegan enough, not PC enough, or a gentrifi-

er. So, classic. Also, I was curious about what Mattilda's deal was so I googled her name and found that all her books are sold on Amazon.com. Yeah, radical!! Looks like her purse is pretty much assimilated.
—Joe in Philly

Dear Joe:
The point of my column was not to decide who is and who is not a gentrifier. Rather, my point was that DIY businesses often unwittingly serve as the kinder, gentler version of urban removal by drawing yuppies to "edgy" neighborhoods in the first place. In this sense, DIY businesses serve as cover for the more brutal forces of gentrification that follow, and must be held accountable if we are ever to conjure any hope of fighting the violence of demolition, luxury development, cultural erasure and grotesque consumerism that gentrification represents. That's just a very basic first step, and it is consistently shocking to me when people who profess radical, anti-capitalist or even progressive politics are unwilling even to take that first step, and instead become so ridiculously defensive.

In my column, I was very conscious to place myself and other Gay Shame activists within the process of gentrification—there is no one involved in Gay Shame who would not immediately admit this, and who is not actively struggling to envision other possibilities. Do we make mistakes? Absolutely—that's why I included our own inconsistencies in my column. Do we always succeed? Absolutely not. We are not striving for purity, but accountability seems a bare minimum to ask of our supposed peers.

As for the fact that my books are sold on Amazon, I actually have no choice in this matter, since my books are sold through the publishers and not directly through me (if I'm lucky, I get maybe a dollar per book). Yes, Amazon is yet another exploitative mega-corporation that had been instrumental in putting independent bookstores out of business. Ironically, however, Amazon is also the most reliable place to find books published by smaller publishers who lack the benefits of corporate distributors, as well as out-of-print books and even self-published books (which even the best independent bookstores often refuse to carry). Publishing is an absolutely tragic state of affairs, where a few huge companies make millions, and almost everyone else is struggling even to attempt to make a living. Unless you are creating your work specifically for a circle of friends, and it is distributed outside of the commercial marketplace, you're pretty much stuck with various compromises in integrity. MRR, *for example, is sold at DIY venues like Borders and Tower. For me, it's important that my work find as large an audience as possible. So far, I've been lucky, principled and/or stubborn enough that I haven't been forced to make compromises in the actual content of the work. Feel free to watch me in the future.*

Love,
—Mattilda

MRR—
Thanx for consistently putting out issue after issue, consistently. I have a lot of trouble in my life focusing on larger projects, and I pretty much find great difficulty in focusing on the smallest and easiest of things, so I honestly don't know how the fuck you do it, and it makes me feel even crappier when it takes me months of writing/deleting/hating my thoughts and getting them out into my shitty zine, *Direct Impact*.

But yeah, it's such a breath of fresh air to me to read about punk rock in something that I can hold in my hands. The online blogs of today are not my thing, what can I say? I'm only 23 and feel passionate about cassette tapes, paper zines, and the like. When I was 16 or so, I remember downloading Operation Ivy and A Global Threat songs of from Napster, before the lawsuits, and it led me to buy the bands' material, so I'm not saying I'm against the Internet, I just feel that it is a pale imitation for what holds true in my heart: reading opinions on paper in front of me, and passing it on to my friends, telling them, "Check out this article!" To me, the personality, the spunk, the excitement, is all lost online, and I'll continue to subscribe, buy, trade, and distro DIY, paper-in-your-hand zines to the end (of the world, of paper zines, which one is first? I don't know). All the columnists, letter writers, scene reporters, everyone, keep up the awesome work…

Some awesome records that have come out somewhat recently I would like to share: The Weekend Nachos *Torture* 7", I Object! *Teaching Revenge* LP, xBrainiax *Disgrace to the Corpse of Eric Wood* (31 song!) 7", and the Merkit 7"—all great records. Write to me if you don't know where to get them already, and the Hombrinus Dudes, a band from my area and beloved local scene of Grand Rapids, MI, are coming out with their full-length album soon, so keep an eye out for that…write for any/everything.
—Sock
306 1/2 North Fifth Street
Grand Haven, MI 49417

MRR—
My name is Steve and I am currently living in Monroe County Jail in NEPA serving time for aggravated assault on an officer. I'm nineteen years old and have been reading your zine since age thirteen. I love reading it every month because even though I'm in the joint, Maximum Rocknroll helps me keep up with what's going on in the current punk scene. I am writing because I was reading the May '06 issue and read Bill Florio's column and it kind of pissed me off how he continually refers to how lame Leftover Crack is. I mean, I don't understand the problem he has with them. I have been listening to Choking Victim and Leftover Crack since I started getting into music at around age thirteen and have always been a fan of theirs. I think they they have some really great songs like, for example, "Operation Move." Well, besides the whole Leftover Crack thing I also find it funny how in the columns in this issue there is shit talked on Fat Wreck, Punkcore, Jade Tree, and Against Me among others and then a few pages over there are advertisements for Fat Wreck, Jade Tree, and bands comparing themselves to Leftover Crack. There's even a Choking Victim show advertised! Well, I appreciate your time and I just wanted to say that I loved the pieces on ABC No Rio, Suburban Death Machine, and Vitamin X. I would love to see an interview with Defiance: Ohio if possible. Anyways, I am still a loyal fan as always. Peace and love,
—Stephen Benford
Monroe County Correctional Facility
4250 Manor Dr.
Stroudsburg, PA 18360

Stephen—
It's true that our columnists can be an opinionated lot, which is why we love 'em (or love to hate 'em). Our advertising policy is simple: we only accept ads from strictly independent labels (which means no major distro) putting out punk records/CDs that we also review. This doesn't guarantee those labels good reviews, nor does it make them immune from the critiques or concerns of our columnists, coordinators, shitworkers, or readers. Furthermore, we punx are a pretty diverse lot, so it's only natural that there would be contradictory opinions expressed in the pages of this here zine, including your own. Thanks for your letter.
—Golnar

DEPT. OF CORRECTIONS!

In the interview with George Hurchalla in issue #276, we spelled George's last name "Hurchulla." What the hell is wrong with us? Don't we have proofreaders or something? We'd like to apologize to George for our blunder, as well as any readers we confused.

OUT IN WINTER 2005:

KNUCKLESCRAPER - Debut EP
X-MGR 1000mph Gulf Coast Crackcore
DUDMAN EP & DUDMAN/NK6 Split
Relentless Tokyo ultra-distort
XBRAINIAX - 31 song EP
31 song ballistic ADD assault
APARTMENT 213 - 1993-97 CD
90s raw Clevo power violence
BREAKFAST 2nd LP
Round 2 of manic Tokyo Skate thrash
INSECT WARFARE - Debut EP
Mega-ultra-blast ala early EARACHE
MINDLESS MUTANT - Debut EP
Chino area full throttle fastcore
NO DICE - One Sided Lmted EP
Brand new insane Bay Area speedcore
SOCIETY OF FRIENDS - Coll CD
Manic Texas HC from late 90s
ROSENBOMBS - Debut EP
Bay Area SIEGE style ultra-core
SECOND OPINION - EP/CD
High energy HMB thrashcore
CALL THE COPS - Debut EP
AZ thrash ala STRAIGHT AHEAD
KUNGFU RICK - 2xCD
Entire collection. Insane grind/HC
BARBARIC THRASH CD COMP SERIES
Brazil, SE Asia, Euro Cali, & Japan
HIT ME BACK - Debut LP
Socal ultra-posi thrash kings
L'AMICO DI MARTUCCI/OHUZARU-CD
Collection of dual fast Italian HC
HATRED SURGE - Debut EP
One-person fastcore a la Despise YOU

SIX TWO FIVE

xBATHINGxRULESx

Out on 625 Not-So-Fast:

GIANT HAYSTACKS/TIMF-Split EP
Angst punk meets MINUTEMEN!
LOVE SONGS - Debut CD
Ex-WHN/Your Mother goes Descendants!

OLDER TITLES FROM.....

HE WHO CORRUPTS, LIFES HALT, COMPLAIN, NO TIME LEFT, DOWN IN FLAMES, HIGHSCORE, HIT ME BACK, QUATTRO STAGIONE, FAR LEFT LIMIT, NINE CURVE, DISCARGA, OUT OF VOGUE, LIE, THE REAL ENEMY, FACE OF CHANGE, MAD RATS, LETS GROW, SHANK, RISE ABOVE, ETA, SOCIETY OF FRIENDS, HHH, GNAT SUCKERS, and IMMORTAL FATE.

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FOR WEEKLY UPDATES CHECK:
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Tokyo early Ripcord style HC
HOSTILE TAKEOVER - EP
New Bay Area HC fast attack
DOMESTIK DOKTRIN - Debut EP
Indonesian high energy manic HC
UZI SUICIDE - 2nd EP
Infest influenced Bay Area HC!
DØPPELGÅNGER - EP
Blazing fast Bay Area powerviolence!
HERO DISHONEST/MDR - Split EP
Finnish and Brazilian high energy HC!
I SHOT CYRUS - Titanus LP/CD
Pulverizing Brazilian fast attack
I DON'T CARE/QUILL - split CD
Split Tokyo high-speed assault
BLOODY PHOENIX - Debut EP
Ex-Excruc Terror grinding blastcore
MACHINE GUN ROMANTICS - CD
Collect. of manic US powerviolence
LORDS OF LIGHT - EP
Wicked 3-man grind/fastcore, ex-SOF
CHARM - Shikami EP
Crazed Tokyo distort hyper thrash.
IRON LUNG - Debut LP/CD
Fucking sweet ass tunes bro
THEY LIVE - LP
Scorching fast NY power violence
THE KILL - Demo 7"
Crack induced grind explosion
DISCARGA - 10" LP
2nd LP from Brazilian LARMers!
SECRET 7 - Debut EP
11-song, 1-sided Singaporean thrash

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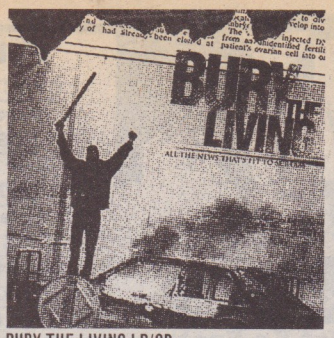

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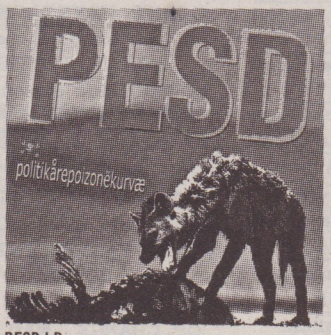

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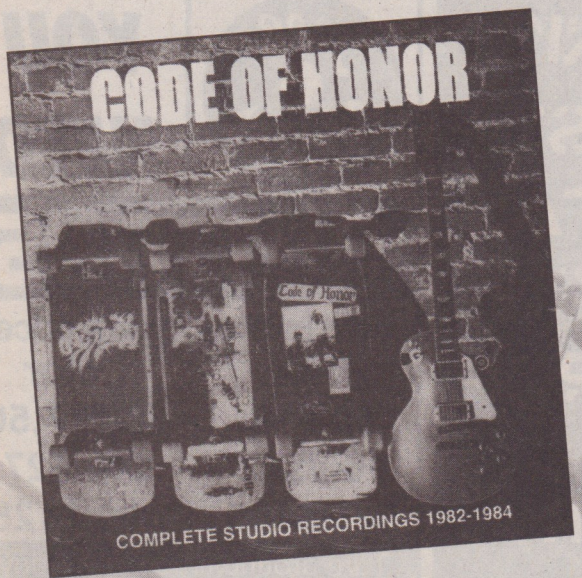

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COLUMNS

The punk records two of my friends had brought back from their summer of '85 vacations were, to me, like discovering gold and the gold mine all in one. I made cassette copies of the records and played them pretty much exclusively, saying good-bye to my played out new wave records.

I wanted to get my hands on more records and the punk aesthetic, but neither was where I could find them. This was twenty years ago and if Hot Topic (a not-punk store that sells the punk aesthetic) or any other store just like it would have existed in the town where I lived, I would have most definitely shopped there.

Eventually, I got over the shock and awe of the punk "sound" from the likes of the Suicidal Tendencies' "Institutionalized" and Peter and the Test Tube Babies' "Banned from the Pubs" and started paying closer attention to what I was hearing from the likes of the Subhumans' *From the Cradle to the Grave* LP and Minor Threat's *Out of Step* LP. My teenybopper self realized punk was more than just a different-for-different's-sake style of music. It had substance that I wasn't mature enough to totally figure out yet, but politically aware seeds were being sewn that eventually sprouted into DIY clues of inspiration and motivation.

Freshly graduated from High School, I high-tailed it to a place a couple hours away that, according to rumors I'd heard, had the music scene I was looking for but was failing to find at home. Gainesville, only 100 miles from where I grew up, felt like I had landed on another planet.

Besides the bands I found there, like the Mutley Chix, the Doldrums, and Stabilizer, I found new ways of doing things and making things happen. I was seeing bands at house shows, not concerts at clubs and arenas. For the first time, I was inspired by an all female band instead of disappointed by them (like, I dunno...the Bangles? Bananarama?). By getting my hands on a copy of *No Idea*, I learned what a fanzine was. I could actually talk to and hang out with someone from the band I'd just seen instead of getting shooed away by a security guard for trying to sneak a peek backstage.

These local bands were playing without a quest for fame and fortune. Making money was not the motivation here. Passion was. And so was fun. Creating a culture by themselves, for themselves seemed to be high on the agenda, too, right next to getting good and stinking drunk. I signed up to stay with the friendly aliens I met on this new planet.

I was in over my head with DIY fun and excitement, surrounded by flyers, hand screened shirts, zines, warehouse practice spaces, Hamm's, bike rides to house shows and four-track recorders. When the Hardback Café opened downtown, I practically took up residency. There, I started to see touring punk bands and to newbie, naïve me, it still seemed as if the question of making money had been left off the agenda.

Not until Nirvana broke into the realm of the rich and famous, followed by Green Day, did I first hear the words "sell out" and questions of money and mainstream cooptation of a subculture fill my head. My little bubble was burst.

For the first time, I stopped to think about how records and zines were put out and how tours were paid for and if the touring bands I had seen come through could possibly be making money. I had heard that it was pretty rare for a band to actually break even on a first tour, for a zine to ever break even and that it was common to be stuck with a bunch of unsold 7"s. Eventually, I started playing in a band and putting out a zine, and I learned about all this "business ethics of punk rock" stuff first hand.

Without baring the gritty details of how the band went from driving two friends' hatchback cars full of equipment three hours north to record our first 7" to touring in a bus, I'm just going to do my best to impart a little wisdom I learned along the way, in ten hopefully palatable bits.

1. I learned that lesser-known bands have an easier time avoiding ethical dilemmas, as long as they keep their mouths shut about things they'd never do. It sucks for them when, oops, they start to get popular and to keep their ball rolling decide to do things a bit differently. Remember, you don't know absolutely 110% for sure what decision you'll make until you're in the position to actually have to make a decision.

2. I learned that when a band does start to gain popularity, for whatever reason, whether it is actual talent or mere mastery of the flavor-of-the-year style, the shit starts to stir. The initial fans want to keep the band unknown and all for themselves. (It makes for über-hip obscurity points, ya know.) They hate the new fans that seem to come out of nowhere. And the band may feel like they're caught between a rock and a hard place trying to please their initial supportive fan base by keeping shows intimate and trying to accommodate the growing pains of an expanding fan base at the same time. If you're in a band like that, don't kid yourself by thinking a solution is to just keep playing the smaller places. You'll have a lot of pissed off people outside on the sidewalk who couldn't get in. If that's the case, you should just break up and quit while you're ahead.

3. I learned that when things get to a certain level, you're damned if you do and damned if you don't. The decisions a band makes will never please everybody. There will always be someone there to give you shit about what you should or shouldn't have done.

4. I learned that inherent contradictions exist in the DIY punk culture and that we punks will never agree on what the ethics of punk business are. For example, anti-capitalist and anti-consumerist themes run rampant in punk music and zines, yet we're producing goods to sell in order to promote and distribute our music and

ideas.

5. I learned that a band's natural, organic growth in terms of popularity is always better than hype and marketing-generated popularity. It's just plain wrong for a record label to purchase mailing lists from other companies so that they can mail free promos to a selected target audience.

6. I learned that it's pretty sad and silly for bands to remix or otherwise rewrite a song of theirs in attempts to make it more appealing to the lowest common denominator, i.e., radio-friendly hit material. The sad part should be obvious. The silly part is because it doesn't matter how appealing it is to the lowest common denominator radio listeners; it's ultimately up to a small handful of record industry jackasses who decide what the next big thing is going to be.

7. I learned that if you're in the privileged position to rock the mic in front of thousands of people, you should be doing more than just singing jingles of entertainment. Mix it up and rock that mic with some subversive commentary. And while you're at it, since you've probably got a good view of what's going on in the crowd, do feel obligated to call out any fuckheads who you see are overstepping bounds of consentual contact. Yes, call out dudes you see who are getting their grab on with the ladies.

8. I learned that fanzines, not mainstream music magazines, are DIY punk's network of print media. Contribute interviews, photos, news, columns, art, and ideas. Subscribe, and when you're done reading an issue, pass it down or leave it in a conspicuous place for someone else to read.

9. I learned that there certainly are differences between independent and major labels—even today with the lines being blurred with independents having ties to major-owned distributors—and that a good excuse to sign to a major label simply doesn't exist. Independent labels can do for a band anything a major can do and do it better. With an independent, chances are you'll keep more control and compromise less. Don't be fooled that a major can get your very important music heard by the most people possible (hell, don't be fooled into thinking that that should be an actual goal!)—just because new people hear it doesn't mean they're going to like it and buy it. Plus, major label A&R guys are always creepy, pretending to be your friend. They are never punks, so why consider them? Folks at independents are much more likely to actually be a punk friend.

10. I learned that not every band that gets bitten by the popularity bug can pull a Fugazi and be perfect. (Didn't those guys write the punk business ethics book?) Chances are if you follow your heart, the same bleeding heart that dragged you into DIY punk culture in the first place, and make your decisions accordingly, full of genuine sincerity and keeping passion at the forefront instead of money and self-promotion, things will be alright.

Punkparents, get in touch.
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They say travel broadens the mind. But tourism is a multi-million dollar industry and there are still a lot of pretty narrow minds out there. Still, one of my fellow columnists has traveled the world (for free!?), and can also boast one of the broadest minds around, so maybe they do go hand in hand.

I haven't done much in the way of exotic traveling myself (unless you count traversing continental Europe or a good swathe of the US in the back of a van) but there are certainly parts of the world I'd like to see before I die. To give you one particularly ludicrous example, I've lived in California for ten years and have never visited Mexico. I never got that urge to grab a backpack and a Lonely Planet guidebook and "do" Central America, or Thailand, or India, or wherever else you might find intrepid twenty-something blue-eyed westerners gripped with an unquenchable desire to visit the world's Internet cafes. I guess it's the "cheap holiday in other people's misery" syndrome, or just white male guilt, but there's something unsettling about the idea of plopping oneself in the middle of some third world country to "absorb the culture" and ogle the natives. It's not that I necessarily think there's anything wrong with traveling per se, I just have a hard time with the imbalance of it all. The western tourist (or traveler if you prefer) has the agency and privilege to visit just about any country he or she pleases, but often, the people of the visited country barely have the means to make it out of their immediate town, never mind their country. Again, I'm not trying to condemn anyone for visiting other countries or whatever, but maybe someone who has done some traveling can write and tell me if they thought about this stuff before or during their trip, and how they dealt with it?

I read an interview in the new issue of *Herbivore Magazine* with writer Inga Muscio, who says she only goes places she's been invited. That struck a chord with me—perhaps that was why I felt so much discomfort at the idea of being the privileged western traveler. If you have been invited somewhere then, presumably, you have made some sort of personal connection with someone living in that country. This goes a long way towards solving the dilemma. Of course, it's rare for the average person to come home from work one day to find a note on the doormat from a random stranger in Costa Rica inviting him down for a two-week stay, all expenses paid. There's still a certain amount of privilege implied in being a writer or artist who is invited to foreign countries to share his or her work—or worse, to experience exotic places on our behalf, and report back in their art on the cultures they "discover."

While it might be unrealistic to expect everyone to nurture personal relationships with locals from any country they might be planning to visit, it might be a way (for the hopelessly guilt-ridden, like myself) to be able to travel and actually feel OK about it. (Note: whatever it seems like, this column is *not* a thinly veiled solicitation for invitations to your country. Honest.)

Actually, with the growing popularity of communication and networking tools like MySpace and Skype, there's a lot of potential for traditional geographic boundaries to become less important. It certainly makes it easier and cheaper for people to foster international friendships—assuming one has access to a computer with an internet connection (that problem of privilege again).

Actually, perhaps the most pragmatic and honest way to approach travel is to acknowledge the economic realities of the situation—"I can go to this country because I can afford it, and the economy of this country depends on tourist dollars." Accept the fact that the locals probably see you purely as a vehicle for bringing your western wealth to their impoverished area. Stay in a luxury resort, get plastered on cheap margaritas, tip generously, and have a blast. A few shots of Sammy Hagar's Cabo Wabo tequila probably goes a long way to alleviating that liberal guilt, huh..?

***

If all is going according to plan, this issue of the magazine extends last month's focus

on punk business. With your permission, I'd like to address the topic a little more.

We punks are quick to get up in arms when one of "our" bands signs to a major label or sells their music to be used on a TV show or in a commercial. It's one of the unwritten principles of punk rock that it cheapens your art when you use it to sell things. In recent times though, the mainstream media and commercial culture have sought to incorporate even the "edgiest" and most rebellious strains of art and music into their efforts to market consumerism and materialism. Maybe instead of being pissed off that they're using the Stooges to sell luxury cars, we should ask ourselves why they're using the Stooges to sell luxury cars. The answer is, because it works. At this point, I doubt there's a style of music out there that couldn't be used to sell something, and if there is, it's certainly not punk rock as we know it. Almost any song by your favorite bands could be played over a commercial for something—maybe not luxury cars, but some disposable consumer product or other—and used to market that product so some demographic. These days, it's become almost the point of making music for some people.

I guess what I'm saying is that at any given time, your favorite band could be offered an unthinkable sum of money for one of their songs to be used in a commercial. If they're a super-political, DIY band with no interest in making money from their art, or at least no interest in being exploited for corporate interests, they'll probably say no. If they're a somewhat political band who could use the money, they might say yes. They may justify it to themselves and their fans by saying they deserve the money because they need health insurance (and why not?) or that they are getting their message out to a wider audience via that 30-second spot between *Desperate Housewives* and *Law And Order SVU* or whatever (I don't even know if they're on the same network, never mind the same night). If they're a pop-punk or skate thrash or metalcore or whatever band with no politics in the music to speak of, they might just take the money and be glad of it, fuck anyone who complains. These are just three scenarios, but the fact is this situation probably plays out differently for each and every band that finds itself offered such an opportunity. Whichever reason your favorite band gives for taking the money and doing the commercial, you will probably feel slightly betrayed.

As members of the punk scene, we derive much of our collective identity from what we perceive as shared values. When we discover that someone we respected didn't share all those values after all, we feel abandoned. However, we all have different ideas of what those shared values are—generally speaking, the one thing that seems to unite us is this: "We are into bands that don't sell out." Obviously, what "selling out" means is open to interpretation, but I think the basic point is true. And when we tie ourselves, our community, our values, our sense of who we are to the whims of individuals in rock and roll bands, we sell ourselves short. Maybe we need to re-adjust our values and beliefs, and devote more attention to the facets of our culture that are less easily defined.

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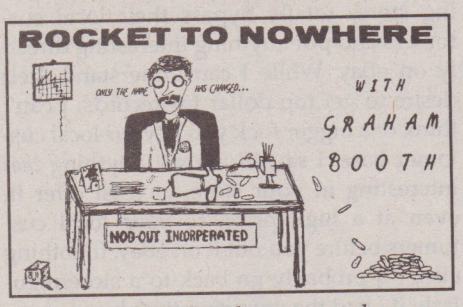
Major label offers and all-inclusive vacation packages to luxury resorts can be directed to me at allan@dropout.cc or PO Box 22971, Oakland, CA 94609, USA.



I guess y'all already gave up long ago, but "brick and mortar" record shopping is quickly becoming a thing of the past. You know—record bins, smarmy store clerks, eye candy on the walls, and records you can hold in your hands before you buy them? Since the New Year, I've witnessed several record stores closing their doors forever in the Los Angeles area. Two of them, Rhino Records and Aron's Records, could arguably be considered "cultural landmarks" for independent music buyers in LA, making the losses all the more resounding. All this amid rumors that one of the Amoeba stores in the Bay Area is closing… As a record collector, things are looking pretty bleak.

At almost 30, I've seen the insides of more record stores than most people would care to in a lifetime. I've bought online from just as many. Call it what you will: a hobby, an obsession, an addiction. Whatever the case, my record buying experiences provide a heap of empirical data that no sales report could ever duplicate. My biggest question: how have any record stores lasted this long?

As a business venture, a record store seems like a pretty bad idea. I guess it's how all businesses operate, but somehow the thought of making a living on a standard wholesale-to-retail mark-up (roughly $1-5 per "unit") is depressing at best. Sure, a store can decide how much extra to charge, but if they get too carried away, the customer will just find another place to buy it for less.

I guess economics bore you to tears? Maybe when you consider that my basic knowledge of economics has actually helped my record collection grow, you'll think twice. For the sake of simplicity, let's say you're a store selling NOFX CDs. Your price is $12.99, your wholesale price is $7.99, so you're making $5 for every NOFX CD you sell. Time to make some money...

First off, let's get you paid. These days it's hard to live on less than $10 an hour. Being realistic (this is a record store folks!), you take it and hope to reap some big profits down the line. On a given work day, you work eight hours, so you need to take in $80 to cover your own salary. At your standard $5 mark-up, you'd need to sell sixteen CDs in a day to pay your $10/hr wage. But it's a big store, and sometimes the store gets really busy. Besides, you don't actually want to deal with customers, so you decide to hire some help. Things are going well at the store so you hire two full-time employees and pay them as little as you can, $6/hr each. They both work eight-hour days as well. Between them, they need to make $96 in a day, or another nineteen CDs you need to sell that day. Current tab = 35 NOFX CDs per day.

Oh yeah, you forgot about paying rent. You decide to get a store in a relatively high profile location to get more foot traffic, and in a nice neighborhood so you don't get robbed. Your monthly rent is $1200. You're closed on Mondays, so your typical month has 26 business days. You pay $46 per day in rent. That's nine more CDs, bringing your total to 44 CDs per day. We haven't even gotten to overhead expenses (computers, promo materials, advertising, supplies, business insurance, taxes, or health insurance for you and your employees). And remember, you're living on $10 an hour. For simplicity's sake, let's say you work a miracle and you can afford all of that crapola on selling 50 NOFX CDs per day. That means the store takes in $650 per day and keeps $250 of it.

Five years ago, selling fifty CDs on a daily basis seemed reasonable for a small three-person operation. Sure, there were really slow days, but one good weekend day could often have made up for it. Nowadays, with MP3s and file sharing, CDs just aren't the boon they used to be. Go to most record stores today, where are all the people? Most people aren't buying CDs

anymore, so why go to record stores? This is true for both mom-and-pop operations and chain stores. CD-only stores are all quickly going out of business. I have no idea how things are faring for major retailers like Wal-Mart or Best Buy, but I would wager that even they are feeling a slump in CD sales.

While CDs have fallen by the wayside, it seems like vinyl has managed to hang on as a niche market. New vinyl seems to sell OK, although the mark-ups are typically not as big because production costs are so much higher. Additionally, if we use the same numbers, I find it unlikely that many stores are able to sell 50 new LPs per day to keep the cash flow coming in.

This is where used inventory comes into play. As we all know, used vinyl is currently booming, due in no small part to the Internet. While prices for specific records can fluctuate greatly, in general, I would argue that prices continue to rise. For a record store, used inventory is a potential lifesaver. Depending on what a store is paying for used records (most stores pay $1-2 or less per LP and won't pay more than $5 per LP), the prices are often almost all mark-up. Figure for a $10 used LP, a store is probably making $7-9 on it. Of course, this is easier said than done. For every $10 record out there, there must be 50 scratched and trashed records worth $1 or less. As a store, you either have to wait for good records to walk in the door (...and wait...and wait...), or you have to get out there and find them: a job in itself.

I think the record stores that are still with us are savvy enough to have a good mix of new and used merchandise, and manage keep a steady flow of used vinyl coming through the door. As a collector, I find the best stores are the ones that put out new stock daily. In some cases, I'll even make the trip two or three times a week if I continue to find new and interesting records. The worst stores are the ones that never put out new stock, and horde all the acquisitions in a backroom for eternity, or worse—for eBay.

Ahhh, eBay! My other record store peeve. It was only a matter of time before all the old record stores discovered eBay, Gemm, and Popsike. Their bins full of dog-eared LPs from the '70s and '80s, after languishing for two decades or more, have suddenly all turned to gold. If you're lucky, you may go into a store with the beloved "old" price tags... But as you approach the checkout counter, you're informed that those prices are no longer valid, and they'll have to look everything up online. Don't worry; on a recent cross-country road trip, I learned that eBay has even hit Little Rock, AR. While at a store there, I pulled out a stack of about thirty 45s, and I proceeded to wait for four hours while the store owner looked up each one individually online, took the Stoopid Records price on Gemm, and knocked off $5. I went home with five records, none too good.

It's not that I resent stores for selling records online. Be my guest. It's the pricing and availability that really gets me. A lot of the time, stores are totally clueless about "what they got," and with nothing else to go on, a store will find a listing for a record online, take it at face value, and use the price. Prices are totally inflated, and if Stoopid can't find one person on the internet to buy it, then some store in Omaha, NE, certainly isn't gonna have some local walk in off the street and buy it.

At least in that case, I'd have the opportunity to buy the record. The more frustrating stores totally bypass their local customers and put anything interesting directly on eBay. While I can understand their desire to get top dollar for records, I can't think of a bigger fuck you to your local customer base. I say, if you get anything *that* interesting in your store, at least offer it, even at a high price, to your local customers before you put it on eBay. If nothing else, I'd probably go back to a store regularly if I had the opportunity to buy a crazy rare record, even if I didn't actually buy it.

And then there's the sad truth that most record stores are totally lazy about accumulating used vinyl. Despite the vast amounts of records available online in box lots or otherwise, I know only a few stores who actually bother buying used stock online. I guess they're used to paying $1-2 per record, but second generation UK punk/anarcho 45s (DISCHARGE, SUBHUMANS, CRASS anyone?), for example, which seem to be a dime a dozen on eBay or elsewhere online, are potentially great stock for a store with local hoodlums just getting into punk rock and willing to drop $10 on an essential punk rock blast. To think, I grew up in Chicago, and until eBay showed up, something like BLITZ's *Warriors* 7" (No Future Records) was a "rare" record, impossible to find in any local store. Nowadays there's no excuse for stores not to be stocking the stuff, easily obtainable, and I think today's kids would surely appreciate it.

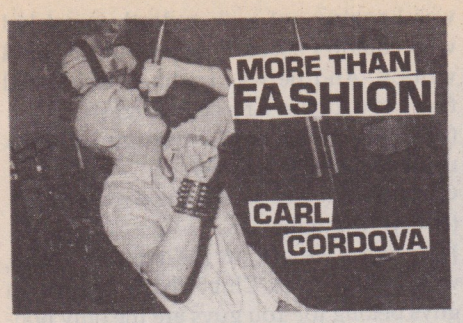
Record stores aren't what they used to be. Consider both Rhino Records and Aron's Records. Rhino had been on a steady decline ever since I first went there six years ago. They moved into a huge space and seemed to do OK on CD sales, but by the end, CDs had slumped, and the vinyl had been sitting there for years with very little turnover. If they were putting new stuff out consistently, I would have been going there once a week instead of once a month, and I'm sure other people would agree. It's no wonder it tanked because obviously no one gave a shit about the place.

Aron's Records was already bad the first time I went there around six years ago, and it continued to get worse. They never seemed to have any new arrivals out on the floor, and I think that's why the place was doing so horribly. As it turns out, they had been hoarding all of the "rare vinyl" in a storage room for several years. Over the past two months, they've been having a clearance sale, slowly trickling thousands of insane records out of storage. I've seen the inside of Aron's Records more times in the last month than in the previous six years combined. The sale breathed new life into the store, and I bet it could've stayed open with the momentum built up during the bonanza, but they obviously just wanted to get out of the record business for good. Suckas!

Times have changed, and the stores that haven't evolved are going out of business. While I will definitely miss doing the rounds at Rhino or Aron's, honestly the stores sucked, no one cared, and their closings were inevitable. The really unfortunate part is that two more cultural landmarks have closed due to economic factors. I still hear stories about the legendary Epicenter (SF), a store I never went to, and, what, five years(?) down the line it remains a regular fixture in the memories of punk collectors worldwide. My hometown of Chicago had its share of landmark record stores as well: Wax Trax, The Dummy Room, Record Swap, and most recently Raw Records all closed their doors. I could wax poetic about specific stories and scores at each of them for hours, but ultimately the real loss is the community spaces.

There's a reason why John Hughes set *Pretty in Pink* in a record store—it has a cultural cache unlike any location, real or virtual, that I can think of. That casual music-charged environment can't really exist anywhere else, be it a Virgin Megastore or MySpace. Amoeba seems to be outlasting the rest of the independents in Los Angeles, but really, is Whole Foods that much better than Albertson's? As these stores continue to go out of business, a very real and visceral space is eroding before us. Before too long, all of our exposure to music may be wholly artificial, and superficial.

So who wants to open a record store?



Y2K Hardcore Revival

1998 and 1999 were pivotal years in hardcore for me. I had just returned to San Diego after a long hiatus in the Midwest. I left all my friends in Cincinnati based on an outdated memory of a city and a state that I hadn't lived in for ten years. The California straight edge scene seemed almost non-existent, as it was in rest of the country at the time. Most of my record purchases centered around old California punk that was hard to come by in Ohio. While rediscovering my California pride via Mystic Records comps, I probably went an entire year without buying a single current record.

I was severely out of touch. Then I read a review of the LIFES HALT demo in *Heartattack*. The reviewer made them out to be a modern version of what I was listening to at the time. Through that demo, I somehow got in touch with a kid named Joe Onlife (who coincidentally had also just moved out to San Diego from Pennsylvania). The newest release on his label just happened to be—you guessed it—LIFES HALT. That EP couldn't have come out at a better time for me. LIFES HALT was one of the first US bands to really combine true DIY punk ideals with high-energy straight edge hardcore. From their shirts to their records, everything had an early '80s California hardcore aesthetic that was refreshing, and people just couldn't get enough of it.

And for good reason. In 1998, if you were a straight edge band you either sounded like FLOORPUNCH or EARTH CRISIS. Today in 2006, no one thinks twice when a group of straight edge kids start a band that sounds like POISON IDEA. The early '80s US hardcore revival was bound to happen sooner or later. California just happened to play a big role in getting the ball rolling, and I am glad I was there to witness it firsthand. It was a very exciting time not just for the straight edge scene, but also for hardcore and punk in general. Of course LIFES HALT shouldn't get all the credit. Other influential bands making inroads in this revival came out of the East Coast and Midwest. Bands like NO JUSTICE, DEAD NATION, and the almighty GORDON SOLIE MOTHERFUCKERS took their cues from the early '80s US hardcore scene. Other California bands like NO REPLY and WHAT HAPPENS NEXT? also provided what Felix Havoc so aptly put in an earlier *MRR* column as "a wake-up call that hardcore was back and had hit hard on the West Coast".

The latter band mentioned is the meat and potatoes of this month's column. As far as I know, the interview below is the first ever done with WHAT HAPPENS NEXT? It originally appeared in a zine I did called *Jesus Come Back*—which, despite *MRR's* ill-informed accusations of being a Christian zine, was really a reference to a SWIZ song, as well as a nod to Sam McPheeters' old publication. Looking at some of my questions now is a little embarrassing, but what the hell? The following interview took place at the Che Café in San Diego sometime in August of 1999. Ernie Halt helped out with some of the questions. Speaking of Ernie, if and when I find my LIFES HALT interview from the same issue, I will print that. Enjoy:

***

JCB: All of you guys are currently in other bands besides WHAT HAPPENS NEXT? From what I understand, WHAT HAPPENS NEXT? is a Bay Area all-star band of sorts. Give some history on how you guys started.

Devon: WHAT HAPPENS NEXT? started with me and Max three years ago having an idea to do some type of '80s thrash band. Chuck from GOOD RIDDANCE wanted to do it with us as well. Instead, it ended up being the four of us: Max, Robert, Craig, and myself. Chuck ended up having other obligations. That was about a year ago.

Craigums: Usually when there is a band, there is a captain, or a leader of that band. Currently we are all spearheading our own projects. So with WHAT HAPPENS NEXT? there is this situation where there are four captains to one ship. I'm waiting for all of us to turn on each other (laughs).

Ernie: Is that why you guys attack each other on stage?

Robert: I just try to stay out of that.

Craigums: I take it out on (Robert's) wife in between shows. (Laughter)

JCB: So what are your guys' other bands?

Devon: I was in ALL YOU CAN EAT with Craig, and Craig has his own band called YOUR MOTHER.

Robert: Don't leave out your old metal bands!

Devon: (sigh) Well, there was this metal band I was in called BLACK DEATH years and years ago. They would play with POSSESSED and DEATH ANGEL.

JCB: Ah, so they were "true metal."

Devon: Oh, we were very metal. I had very long black hair. That was from 1983 to 1984. I actually got kicked out of the band when I grew a mohawk. I crossed over officially into punk in 1985.

JCB: So when you were crossing over to punk, all the punk bands were crossing over to metal.

Devon: Let's just say that when I had to choose between MERCIFUL FATE and DISCHARGE, I chose DISCHARGE.

JCB: How about you Robert?

Robert: FUCKFACE and ARTIMUS PYLE.

Devon: Max is in PLUTOCRACY, SPAZZ, CAPITALIST CASUALTIES, BOMBS OF DEATH, and a whole lot of other ones I can't think of right now.

Ernie: Is he the only drummer in the Bay Area?

Devon: (laughs) Well-

JCB: Max is the "Sammy" of the Bay Area hardcore scene.

Devon: (laughs) Well, I think you get the point. We are all in other bands.

JCB: So there is no problem fitting all four of your swollen egos onto one stage?

Robert: If anything, there is an absence of egos.

Devon: If anything, not to take away from the other bands that we are in, we were the ones stoked to be in a band with Max. All of us were like "Oh boy, we're in a band with Max!" (Laughter) But he doesn't get that. He is so mellow and low-key.

Robert: There are people with swollen heads, and then there is Max, who is the complete opposite.

Craigums: Are you saying Max has a shrunken head?

Ernie: So who is the positive guy in the band?

JCB: Yes, who is the man that has kept the P-M-A in WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

Everyone: Max!

Devon: Definitely Max. He goes to school, plays in four bands, does a zine, skates, has a girlfriend, runs a label, *and* is still in a good mood!

JCB: Okay lets move on. The song "Infinite Cycle" discusses the one constant that has remained in the hardcore/punk scene, really, since its inception. That constant is blatant stupidity. What keeps you here then? What does this scene or community offer you guys that is so much better than any other community?

Craigums: I don't think it matters. I just think we picked a style, and I don't think that style represents that attitude.

Devon: I don't think that's what he is ask-

ing, Craig.

Robert: I know what you're asking. I've certainly been in this for less time than anyone else in the band, but I still have run into my share of really, really fucking *stupid* people, who do really fucking *stupid* things. But no matter how many stupid people I run into, or fucked up things I see happen, the good people that I've met, and the good things that I've seen happen, will always outweigh the negative. I am not saying I am so positive that I overlook the negative shit that goes on. But I realize that I have met the best friends that I've ever had, and ever will have. And I will continue to meet them as long as I'm into hardcore.

Devon: The type of friendship and bonding that goes on here is unparalleled. I have friends that live thousands of miles away, some of which I might not see except for maybe once a year. But in those three compact hours that I spend with them, I learn so much, and share so much, that you know you have a bond that goes deeper. Deeper than the superficial relationships you have with your co-workers that you see every fucking day of your life. With some of our prior bands, we have traveled around and basically put our lives in the hands of complete strangers in hopes that yeah, they are going to book a show for us, or they are going to find us a place to stay. We didn't even speak their language, and we knew hardly anything about their country.

JCB: What country are you referring to?

Devon: I am referring to Brazil. Basically the former band, that Craig and I were in went to Brazil. We had complete strangers meet us at the airport, bring us to a show, and then put us on a bus to the next city. From there we met another set of complete strangers who in turn let us spend the night, and then ferried us from Brazil to Argentina. We were going on blind faith that we were going to be met by these kids that didn't even know who we were as a band. They just knew we were a bunch of English speaking honkeys. It's almost unreal that stuff like that can happen today, but it does. It's all about unity.

Robert: I know that term has been overused to death, but there really is so much unity within the international hardcore scene.

JCB: Touching on the subject of unity, do you think that WHAT HAPPENS NEXT? attracts more of a broader audience because of the diversity of your band members? I mean there aren't too many thrash/grind bands that X up for shows.

Devon: Well, the band is a reflection of ourselves. So it's not a conscious thing to attract any certain type of crowd or audience.

JCB: No, I know you don't set out to do that. I'm just saying that it's rare occasion that you see someone on stage with dreadlocks down to his back and a beard, with X's on his hands and a shirt that says "Drug Free" on it. Not to mention jumping around stage like you were in CHAIN OF STRENGTH. I think that is fucking awesome.

Devon: Yeah, I guess the fact that we look dirty and crusty but we have X's on our hands says something.

JCB: Definitely.

Devon: I mean, I wasn't ever handing out literature in the Philippines saying, "go vegan!" A lot of people were curious though, and I was happy to answer their questions about why I had made the decision to go vegan, or go straight edge. I find it a lot more effective than "go vegan or die."

JCB: And it's not something you see in other bands in San Francisco. There really isn't a straight edge scene there, right?

Devon: No, not really,

Robert: Well, you hardly see anyone X'd up at shows that doesn't have frosted hair and lots of beads around their neck. (Laughs) Not that that is bad or anything!

JCB: So obviously you guys are doing something different. Something that isn't really done in the music scene that you guys come from.

Devon: Yes, in that sense you are right.

Ernie: I've noticed that you guys have some songs in Japanese. What's that about?

Devon: That comes from the fact that we love Japanese hardcore. It's kind of like homage to the Japanese hardcore scene. Every one of us in our prior or current bands, with the exception of WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?, have gone to Japan and made lots of good friends and had lots of positive experiences.

Ernie: What is your opinion on foreign bands that sing exclusively in English? Do you think that that by singing in English, they think that is the only way they are going to be any good?

Devon: It is true that some of the bands I have met overseas have had a bit of an inferiority complex. And they think that by singing in English, that that is the only way anyone will pay attention to their message.

Robert: But you have to remember that English is an international language now. You can communicate with so many different people in English.

Devon: And it's bizarre, because in Japan I was hanging out with a death metal kid who couldn't speak English, but he could write it. And he was trading black metal tapes to a guy in Greece in English.

(At this moment a girl interrupts us to ask us for a cigarette lighter)

Craigums: You're asking the wrong table!

(Everyone laughs)

JCB: Since we are on the topic of Japan, what is this "'80s Club" that I heard you guys belong to? You guys are the only non-Japanese band involved correct?

Devon: Basically when we started WHAT HAPPENS NEXT? we had no idea that there was this bunch of bands from Japan that were basically doing what we were doing as far as music goes. Our friends in Japan were like, "There is a whole crew of kids that are totally into '80s thrash. They dress the part with bandanas and turned-up baseball caps, and they are all about skating."

JCB: What are these band's names?

Devon: CRUCIAL SECTION, RAZOR'S EDGE, D.R.Y-

JCB: D.R.Y.? DIRTY ROTTEN-

Robert: No, DRUNK ROTTEN YOKOHAMA.

Devon: Yeah, they are all about drinking.

JCB: What about FLASH GORDON?

Devon: Yeah, FLASH GORDON is part of it. They're really good.

JCB: So how did you get in? Did you have to fly to Japan and to get jumped in?

Devon: (Laughs) No, when they found out about us, they asked for an audio recording and a videotape. We sent both to them, and they said, "You're in." I mean there is an obvious difference between us and the rest of the bands in the '80s club.

Craigums: Yeah, well three-fourths of this band is straight edge, while most of the other 80's Club bands drink.

Robert: CRUCIAL SECTION's button has a skateboard on it and it says, "Lets drink and mosh!"

Craigums: Obviously there is some blending. It's very random besides the fact that we all have the '80s theme going on.

Devon: Yeah, and just cause we are in this "club" doesn't mean that we are going to limit ourselves to playing one type of sound.

Ernie: Yeah, don't think those metal breakdowns have gone unnoticed!

Robert: I don't know what you're talking about (laughs).

Ernie: C'mon, you're the metalhead in the band!

Craigums: Actually, he's the least metalhead in the band.

Robert: I am so NOT the metalhead in the band.

Craigums: I'll show you the perfect example of why he is not. Show them your back piece Robert.
(Craigums begins to lift up Robert's T-shirt to reveal an entire back tattoo of the portrait of Willie Nelson)
Craigums: You like that?
JCB: That is awesome.
Ernie: I have another question. What is your fascination with Nardcore? First you were DON'T BE MISTAKEN, then you got your current name from ILL REPUTE right?
JCB: So WHAT HAPPENS NEXT? used to be called DON'T BE MISTAKEN?
Devon: Yeah, we were called that when Chuck from GOOD RIDDANCE first started it with us.
JCB: What is its relation to the Nardcore scene?
Devon: DON'T BE MISTAKEN is from AGRESSION. And I really thought it was a great name. But then Chuck couldn't commit to the band because he was already in CREEP DIVISION and GOOD RIDDANCE.
Robert: And I would like to take the time to thank Chuck for being too busy to play in this band. (Laughter)
Devon: So that's when Max said "Why don't we name it after the ILL REPUTE album "WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?" And we thought that sounded fine.
Robert: You left out the part where we all went out into the fields and meditated for days to the Gods of Nardcore. "Hmmm. Oh mighty Gods of Nard please send us a name…"
(Everyone laughs)
JCB: I'd like to go back to another song off the 7". This one is directed at Devon in particular. In your liner notes, you dedicate the song "Bobo" to "a person whose influence rivals that of your own father." Who is this person?
Robert: Can I guess since he has never told me?
JCB: Well, if it's something personal, we can skip that question.
Devon: No, I don't mind. It's basically dedicated to a friend that has definitely influenced everyone that I know. And it's not about Jesus Christ.
(Everyone laughs)
JCB: I was pretty sure that it wasn't. But some of the lyrics could be construed as having some spiritual overtones.
Devon: Just recently, I was looking back over (the lyrics) and saying, "Damn, I hope someone doesn't think I am writing about Jesus. It's really dedicated to Tim Yohannan of *Maximumrocknroll*. "Bobo" was actually a nickname that some friends and I who actually helped him work on the magazine years and years ago gave him. And I know that he would never want a eulogy, let alone in a hardcore thrash song. I wrote it really because everyone that I have met in the world apart from my relatives has been influenced in some way by him. Whether it is indirectly or directly, Tim Yohannan has influenced every person that is sitting at this table right now. *MRR* is the common denominator that—
Robert: I can pretty much say I would have never met my wife if it weren't for that magazine.
Devon: Basically, the song is about how I used to listen to *MRR* radio, and read *MRR* magazine while living in the suburbs in 1984. It's how his words and writings influenced my life.
JCB: Okay. Can I deviate from the topic a little?
Devon: Sure, you're the man with the tape recorder.
JCB: The staff back at *Jesus Come Back* deliberated many a late night coming up with the one question to gauge just how "hardcore" someone really is. Actually it was just Joe and myself. But I thought I would throw it in since I am running low on interesting questions to ask.
Devon: Oh-oh.
JCB: Out of the four men to front the almighty BLACK FLAG, who was the best?
Craigums: I have my answer.
Devon: Dez Cadena.
Craigums: Definitely Dez.
Devon: Not to take away from the intensity that Henry brought when he joined, I mean *Damaged* is a great album, but-
JCB: Great? It's the most hardcore album of that time period! Henry Rollins transformed a great punk band into one of the most influential hardcore bands of all time.
Devon: Yeah, but there is something about Dez. He is so catchy.
JCB: Catchy? There's no "catchy" in hardcore. If you're talking about catchy, then you might as well go with Chavo.
Ernie: See, no one went for the Mexican guy.
JCB: Okay, Hank is my first choice. Dez comes in a close second.
Craigums: But *Damaged* was an accumulation of everything the band had done *before* Henry.
JCB: True. But Henry brought a new sense of urgency and angst to the old songs that was simply not found in the other three singers. Dez's version of "Damaged" is mediocre *at best* when put up against Rollins' "Hey look at me, I am a motherfucking psycho" version of the same song.
Ernie: Did I mention that no one ever picks the Mexican in that question?
(Laughter)
Devon: I think its funny that Henry was so adamant about not drinking, yet he sings "Six Pack".
Robert: Yeah that is funny.
JCB: The way Hank talks about BLACK FLAG in **Get in the Van** before he joined, I wouldn't have been surprised if he would've started drinking just because Greg Ginn told him to.
Craigums: Oh-oh. Here comes the man of the hour.
(Max walks up to the table)
Max: Did you get a video of SPAZZ?
JCB: No, actually I was holding some guy's camcorder while he was participating in the your "wall of death". But I do have some phat ass digital pictures that I can send you via email.
Robert: What kind of digital pictures were they?
Craigums: I believe he used the words "phat" and "ass"
Devon: Do you have a problem with large asses?
JCB: I meant "phat ass" in the utmost positive sense. I guess we better start closing up this interview. Any last questions you might have for them, Ernie?
Ernie: Yeah. You guys sing about skateboarding on your 7". Can you guys actually skate?
Devon: Max can skate really well. The rest of us can roll like hell.
Ernie: I guess it's not so much if you skate well, but can you do fat grinds? I have heard too many old guys in bands saying that they can skate, and all they end up having is a list of complaints.
JCB: Yeah, I can list about 97 of them.
Robert: I could not skate to save my fucking life.
Craigums: I could skate to save my life…if it meant running from a dog with two legs.
(Everyone laughs)
Robert: I could probably run faster than I could skate.
JCB: Any last words? You sure you don't want to leave any positive comments for the positive youth out there?
Devon: I think its funny that we are pegged as a "positive" band, when most of are lyrics are negative in the sense that there are a lot of idiots out there. You have to create the positive in yourself by rejecting stupid behavior. But for the most part our lyrics are pretty much about how we are all idiots, and how we continue to repeat idiot behavior.
Craigums: I enjoy making a lot of new friends. Friends are crucial. This stretches

out from come say "Hi" after we play, to writing me a letter. Los Angeles is a great example. I have hated LA for so long. Because we always had bad shows-

Robert: Every show that I have ever played there has been complete garbage until we met the LIFES HALT kids.

Ernie: That was probably before the PCH. The PCH is our life's blood in LA.

JCB: The stuff that is going on in LA right now is amazing.

Craigums: I guess we just kept on hitting on all the wrong nerves until we finally found a nice bunch of "fucks" to hang out with.

Ernie: Hey, that's not positive!

Devon: Its really weird. Even though we have all been in different bands, we have all shared very similar experiences as far as touring in Southern California. I am talking about the fact that we always had a horrible time in LA, and that San Diego always fell through. I guess Max is our lucky charm. Things are turning around because we have had some of our best shows in LA, and we finally got to play the Che Café.

JCB: Would you say things are looking up for WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

Devon: Things are *definitely* looking up for WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

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Youngblood Records

There's been a lot of talk about the new IRON AGE LP that just came out on Youngblood. *Constant Struggle* is really good, especially if you are fan of the late '80s NYHC crossover stuff like ICEMEN and later CRO-MAGS. Surprisingly, I even hear some early METALLICA. Since they are already the talk of all the hardcore sewing circles*, I'd like to focus some attention on the Youngblood release that had the misfortune of being released simultaneously alongside that LP. That release is the new KNOCK DOWN CD discography. Do not sleep on this tremendously underrated band (again). This discography compiles their self-titled EP, the *Full Contact* demo, and two unreleased songs. It contains members of SHARK ATTACK, NO WARNING, VIOLENT MINDS, and is better than all three of them (no joke). The demo stuff is pretty solid positive youth crew in the vein of the Youngblood CARRY ON EP. But it's on the self-titled record where KNOCK DOWN really come into their own; delivering seven blistering hardcore songs that all clock in under a minute. Think ANTIDOTE, AGNOSTIC FRONT, and a little S.O.A. Go to www.youngblood-records.com to order this and the IRON AGE LP.

Thank You Arnd Burges

I want to take this time to thank Arnd Burges for sending me a DVD of an awesome DEAD STOP show from 10/02/05 in Bielefeld, Germany. Thanks Arnd! I owe you one. I've heard recently that DEAD STOP might be calling it quits. It's going to be a shame to see one of Europe's finest hardcore bands go. If you haven't checked this band out yet, I would recommend doing so before the opportunity is gone.

That's about it for this month. Please send the first FOUR WALL FALLING EP to: Carl Cordova, 746 Baker Street, San Francisco, CA 94115. Or you can just send a nasty email to ih8thekids@gmail.com.

**These sewing circles make CRO-MAGS hats exclusively (as seen worn by Aaron Melnick from INTEGRITY).*

"It's the punk rock business issue," explains Shari, as she flips through the latest issue of *Maximumrocknroll* that's on my stepfather's glass table.

"Uh huh," I say, busy flipping through the channel guide on the Time-Warner cable remote, trying to find something other than a Lifetime movie or some stupid show about Nazis on the "H" channel. "H," of course, for Hitler.

"What do you think of the whole punk rock thing and the DIY thing and all that?" she asks, not knowing what I've been through over the last 20 years.

"I got mixed feelings," I tell her.

"Mixed like how?" she has to ask.

So it's then I tell her the Lookout! Records story. The one that appeared in issue number 165 of this here magazine. February of 1997, I think.

As she listens, she begins to understand this whole "corporate" vs. "indie" thing. And as I tell her the story, I think more about it as well. About how Chris and Molly from Lookout! ended up being not such nice people, and how, in the end, Larry Livermore apologized to me and was the great human being I always knew he was.

After telling her the whole story I realized people go through changes and learn from their experiences. And that is probably the most punk rock thing *any* of us can do. I realize that I've been a real jerk at times—but it's okay. It happens to all of us. I'm glad the whole Lookout! thing is over, and happy to have my old friends back.

Sometimes we have to forgive.

But let me back up a bit...

*

So, there I was, for the umpteenth time in a row, having the same fucking dream. I'm in Berkeley, the sun is shining, the sky is blue, the trees are a lovely shade of green. I'm walking down a crowded street. I'm not sure if it's Telegraph Avenue or University. Whatever.

I feel something in my hand and I look down to see what it is. It's another hand. Connected to that hand is an arm and a person. The person is wearing a light, flowery summer dress, which blows gently in the spring California breeze. In the other hand of this person is a large lollypop. You know the kind, all different colors, twirled into one big sucker. The person offers me a lick and I take it. I can taste all the fruits, and my mouth waters. Then the person starts to skip, and I do the same to keep up. We come to a hopscotch game drawn on the sidewalk in chalk. We both stop and look at it.

Then I look up and see hundreds and hundreds of people. Punk rockers. Looking at me and the person in the flowery dress. They are waiting for us to play the game. I look over at the person in the flowery dress, and he looks back at me. He wants me to go first. I shake my head no, so he gives me his lollypop to hold and goes about doing the hopscotch game. He hops on his foot, jumps on two feet, hops on one foot, spins around, and comes back, doing the same thing. He then takes the lollypop and says for me to do the same thing.

I look at him, and the crowd of punks. They are staring silently at me. I start to play the game but stop after one jump.

I look at the person in the dress and he says, "Keep going, George, keep jumping!" I say that I won't.

He then says, "You have to, you have to!"

I get really pissed and stand still. All the punk rockers start to make catcalls and boo me. I feel like shit.

I know I should finish the game so that the guy in the dress likes me, and the punks. But my feet won't move. I won't let them. I'm pissed. I tell the person in the dress that I've had enough. That I won't jump anymore. He just shrugs his shoulders and licks his lollypop. I look at the crowd, and they look really pissed. I know if I finish doing the hopscotch game, they'll all like me.

But I can't.

"I can't do this, Larry," I say to the per-

son in the dress. It turns out that it's Larry Livermore, the owner and guy who runs Lookout Records.

"I can't jump anymore."

"You do want the full-length, right?" he asks, as he skips around in circles, licking his lollypop.

I look at him. It is him, alright. In a dress. And Judy Garland *Wizard of Oz* shoes. Red ones. He puts his hands on his hips.

"George, you'll do what I want if you want the full-length," explains Larry.

I try to think about which full-length he's talking about. But I know. It is the Furious George one. I stand still and don't move. Suddenly some angry punk throws a bottle at my head.

"Hey Furious George," says the punk, you gonna keep playing the game?"

Then another taunts me.

And another.

I feel my heart start to race, and beads of sweat coming down my forehead. I try to tell everyone that I don't wanna jump anymore, but they can't hear me. By now everyone is screaming at me. My heart starts to go faster.

I look over to Larry, and he just shrugs his shoulders.

"George and Larry sitting in a tree, K-I-S-S-I-N-G," the crowd starts to chant.

I feel humiliated.

I know that if I finish the hopscotch game, everything will be okay. They'll still continue with their taunts, but I'll have my full-length. And that's all I really want. The full-length. I look at the crowd again and see my ex, Nick, my step-dad, and Michael and Evan from the band. They are just staring at me. The crowd sings louder and louder and I cover my ears, screaming, "Noooooooooooo!"

They don't stop.

Suddenly Larry grabs my hands and tells me everything will be okay. I look down at his Judy Garland shoes, and he is tapping them together. I look up and everyone is gone.

Well, almost everyone. There are a few punks left scattered around, but they seem sorta disinterested in Larry and I.

Larry starts to skip away, holding my hand, and I skip along with him. I then sort of leave my body and see Larry and I skipping down some street in Berkeley, into the sunset.

That's about when my heart explodes, and I wake up. Screaming. And sweating. And cursing myself out for playing the game. For even starting to play the game. I feel like shit.

*

Flash back some years ago.

Real life.

I'm out in San Francisco with the False Prophets, my old band. We are supposed to do a bunch of shows on the West Coast but only end up playing Gilman before the band basically breaks up. The singer hates the bass player. The other guitarist hates the bass player. The bass player hates the singer and other guitarist. I like the singer, other guitarist, and bass player.

The drummer, of course, doesn't count. He's too busy going to the Lusty Lady, dropping tokens in slots, and beating off to naked women. I remember one morning at breakfast he told me all about it.

"George," says Kyle, our new German drummer, who was to last about a month, "this place is great. You put in money and see pussy. Then you can whip it out and make yourself come. This San Francisco is a wonderful place." As I listened to him, he sounded just like Arnold Schwarzenegger. The Governator.

"Yeah, Kyle," I say, "but you can do that in New York too. And a lot more of it."

"Yeah, George," he replies, "but here, in San Francisco, the girls are punks. In fact, some of them work at Maximumrocknroll!"

Of course we finished breakfast really quickly, and I found myself buying piles and piles of tokens an hour later.

So I'm in San Francisco, the band is basically shot, and for some reason, Mykel Board is out there as well. Two Jews from New York out on the West Coast. It turns out Mykel is playing Gilman with Artlessless, a throw-together band. Somehow me and Chicken John, agree to play with him for a couple of songs. What the hell, Chicken John, from the band that cannot be mentioned (Letch Patrol), was doing in San Francisco at that time, I'll never know. Probably hanging out with our drummer.

So the night Mykel is playing Gilman. Tim Yohannnn, editor and short dictator of Maximumrocknroll, drives us out to Berkeley in his dinky blue station wagon.

As we go over the Bay Bridge, I see all these mail crates in the back seat, and ask Tim what they're for. He tells me I'll find out tomorrow when I help mail out all the subscriptions.

I knew I shoulda gone home earlier.

We get to Gilman, and Tim goes inside. I hang out a bit, drinking some beer some kids have, not letting Tim, or anyone at Gilman know I'm doing it.

You weren't supposed to drink there, but it seemed everyone did.

Anyway, I finally go inside, and everyone is setting up for the show. There is some guy on stage going "check check check" into a microphone, and the soundman, above us, on some sort of balcony, playing with a bunch of knobs. I walk into one of the back rooms and find Chicken John, Tim, Mykel, Jane Guskin (an old shitworker and columnist from Maximumrocknroll), and Larry Livermore, the president of Lookout! Records.

Everyone is joking and having a good old time. We all sit around and tell jokes for awhile, and Tim keeps telling me my jokes suck, as he laughs.

I really miss that laugh.

Then he asks me if I want to go outside and check on things. I say, "Sure," and hope he doesn't smell the booze on my breath.

We go outside, and some kids clearly can't afford to get in, so Tim actually lends them the money, and gives them his address so they can mail him back the money. I tell Tim he's an idiot, and he'll never see the money again. He tells me I'm wrong, and explains that 90 to 95 percent of people actually mail him back the money.

Fucking Californians. Figures.

*

A few minutes later I hear a loud smacking noise, and turn around to see some skinhead punch this guy with a blue mohawk in the face.

Geezus.

Tim and I yell for the skinhead to stop, and he asks us if we want some. We look at the skinhead, and the small army of skinheads behind him.

We do the manly thing and get our asses inside Gilman.

Inside the club, me, Tim, Larry, Jane, and a couple of others try and decide what to do about the skinheads, or walking penises, as I like to call them. Should they be let in to beat people up, or left outside?

It is decided they'll stay outside. Like junkyard dogs.

Tim tries to explain to the skins, who are now at the door, wanting to get in, that they should go home. They get very angry and tell us they'll kill us. I'm used to such talk, having lived in New York, but Tim, Larry, and Jane kinda seem taken aback. Arguing goes on for a while between a bunch of skinheads and Tim. Tim stands his ground, as do the eggheads with the swastika tattoos.

Finally the skins start to back down. We all breathe a sigh of relief, then they rush the door.

Fuckers.

I take a chair with metal legs, and smash it on the concrete floor of the Gilman. It breaks. I hold up the chair leg to the skin-

heads and say, "Okay you bald Mr. Freeze Charlie Brown motherfuckers, who wants their head bashed in first?"

All the skinheads look at me, and then one says, "Hey, you're that commie from the False Prophets, we're gonna kill you."

I tell him and his pals to fuck off, and take a hike. It was strange, but I really wasn't scared of them. I mean, I'm from New York, I got big sneakers, a leather jacket with US pins on it, and everything. And this was fucking California. How tough could a bunch of skinheads from Pussyville be?

Pretty tough, I found out.

The next thing I know, I'm outside with the skinheads, and we are fighting. They are swinging and kicking at me, and I'm doing the same to them.

I look over to my right and see Tim fighting a bunch of them as well. I look over to my left and see Larry doing the same thing. It's all three of us against an army of baldness. We were gonna get our asses kicked, but it felt good fighting these bullies.

Suddenly I heard a girl scream, and looked over and saw a bunch of girl skinheads kick Jane, who was on the ground. I rushed over and got her out of there, only receiving like ten kicks to my own head. I felt like hitting the girls back, but thought that would be un-New York-like. I should have.

Once Jane was free and clear of the Nazi Girl's club, we both stood side-by-side fighting skinheads. I swear the whole thing was like a comic book. I yelled to Tim asking him if he knew where Chicken John was. He told me Chicken was hiding under a couch in the rec room. Figures.

More and more blows were exchanged, and I soon found myself on the ground being pretty well beaten. Suddenly a pair of arms rescued me. It was Richie from Underdog. He was from New York too. I remember him saying, "Let's kick some skinhead ass, New York style," and we went back at it. I was really brave in those days. Maybe nuts.

Yeah, nuts.

We kept fighting and fighting, me, Tim, Jane, Richie, Larry, and a couple of others. At one point I was cornered against the outside wall of the Gilman, and Larry rescued me. He started to beat the shit out of this skinhead that was wailing away on my head. I couldn't believe it. Larry, this skinny little guy, was rescuing me, this guy from New York, with big sneakers, a leather jacket with US pins on them, and an all-around tough guy. Larry, this little, skinny Californian. He hit the skinhead so hard that the skinhead ran away holding his head. I thanked Larry, and he told me it was no problem. Then, like Batman and Robin, we went back to swinging at skinheads. "*Bam!*" "*Biff!*" "*Zoinks!*" It was really out of a comic book.

Somehow, we all ended up back inside. Bloody. Bruised. But not shaken. We had all stood our ground, and got the bullies away from the Gilman. As we all congratulated ourselves, Chicken John got out from under the couch, asking if they were gone yet.

*

From that day on, I have always felt a connection with Larry Livermore.

He stood up, along with Tim and Jane, to a mean bunch of assholes. And fought like a man. More than I thought I would have ever done. He was kinda little and skinny, yet, defended himself, and others.

We got to talk a lot that night, even though we had met earlier, and I really liked the guy. He seemed straight ahead, honest, and nice. We sorta became friends, and on trips out to California, I made it a point to say "hi" to him. He wrote a column in *Maximumrocknroll* that I really enjoyed, and felt he was on my side. I felt he went through stuff that I did, and we had a lot in common. He was my sorta guy.

So, that's why, when Tim Yohannan and friend Ben Weasel suggested I try Lookout Records for Furious George to record with, I got excited.

I knew Larry, and if Tim and Ben said that it was a good label. It was.

I explained to both Tim and Ben that I wanted a label that was honest above everything. I told them about Skyclad, the last label I was on, the one that did the Iron Prostate album. I explained how the guy basically ripped us off, completely, and we never heard from him, or saw our records again. I told them how I was on Alternative Tentacles with False Prophets, and how Jello became an egomaniac who only cared about his own name, and not any of his bands.

I told them I wanted a label that cared, had good distribution, and was run by nice and honest people. They both said that Lookout was. So I believed them, because they believed in Lookout.

Tim told me that Lookout was the most honest label around, and the people who worked there were really nice. Ben basically said the same thing. So I sent them my demo tape.

*

About two months later I got a postcard from Chris at Lookout. He said he really liked the band, but that the label was sort of full right now. The letter was really nice, and I thought it was cool for him to write me back personally. Nice guy.

But I don't give up that easily. If I did, I'd probably be dead. Or happier. Whatever. I called Lookout a couple more times, and kept sending them shit. Tim and Ben said this was a good label. I wanted to be on it. They were supposed to be honest and nice.

Man, I really wanted that after years and years of being ripped off and shit upon by asshole labels. The only good experience I had to date with a label was Vital Music, my pal Tom's label.

Anyway, I kept bugging Lookout, and told them I was coming to the West Coast, and could we have a meeting? Chris and Molly agreed that we could.

*

Now Chris and Molly are two people who seem to run Lookout. Or so I think. Thought. Whatever.

Chris does all those neat cartoons you see on a lot of Lookout releases, and Molly seems to run the business. They are now both married—to each other.

Anyway, I get out to San Francisco, and me and my ex go out to lunch with Molly and Chris. We run into Tim by coincidence. Wow!

Anyway, we talk and stuff, and we all get along really well. Molly and my ex talk about some girlie shit, and me and Chris talk about man's stuff. Video games.

We finally get to talking about a Furious George record, and they both are open to it. I leave the "meeting" pleased.

I stay in San Francisco a while longer, and during that time, Tim says he'll put out a Furious George single. He says he likes the music and the videotape of the band I showed him. I am happier than a pig in shit to be on MRR Records. I see Chris and Molly later that week, and they say we can do a record on Lookout, and we'll work things out via email, etc.

I return to New York.

Victorious.

I didn't get to see Larry while I was out there because he wasn't around, but I'm sure we'll talk in the future.

Things move ahead on schedule, and we get the MRR artwork done real quick. The thing is out so fast, I have to wonder if Tim has magic powers.

Later I find out he does.

Meanwhile, the Lookout thing is moving ahead, slowly, by e-mail, fax, and phone calls.

Molly tells us that what they want to do is give us a full-length, one EP deal. We are super excited. We start to figure out which

songs we'll pull from the record and put on the EP

Molly and Chris fax us a sample contract to look over. It's like twelve pages, and at the end, reads, "LOOKOUT and ARTIST agree to treat each other with respect and openness at all times and recognize that while this agreement provides specific guidelines as to what is expected of each other, the truest contract is one based on trust and friendship."

I read that last sentence over and over, and think to myself how cool and wonderful these people are. I mean, that is really nice. Even though a paragraph before they say, "Artist (and its individual members, if any) acknowledge that Lookout has advised them/him/her of their right to consult legal counsel of their own choosing in connection with the negotiation and execution of this agreement," they also say they'll be cool and friends. The kind of label I was looking for.

Along with the contract they sent me a sample budget of what they thought would be good for the band. We were also to get some tour support and a merchandise agreement. It looked very fair and very nice. It was a go.

The band started to rehearse a lot more to prepare for recording.

We were excited.

*

About a week later I got a call from Molly, from California. She asked me how I was, and I heard something in her voice that wasn't good. I asked her what was going on and she told me.

She said that Larry had come back to town, after being away for a while, and was really pissed off. When I asked her about what, she told me. She said that he was mad that Furious George was getting a record deal. He said that he wasn't involved in the decision making, and he was gonna take it out on Chris and Molly.

He had told them that we couldn't have a record deal. He was punishing them for being bad children and going out on their own. At least, that's what Molly told me.

She then told me we could still do the EP, but the album would have to wait till the fall. This meant that any tour support and the merch agreement were also on hold till the full-length was done. I was really pissed. But more hurt.

We were really excited to do a record with Lookout, and with people Tim and Ben said were cool.

I asked Molly if we were really gonna do a full-length in the fall, and she said we sure would.

She told us to go ahead and record an EP now (like within a fucking week), get the artwork done, and it would be out end of September. She then told us that at the time the EP comes out, we'll start work on the LP.

I was disappointed, as was the band, but I thought I understood. We would just have to wait, like, five or six more months, but we'd get our record out and go on tour. We'd been playing the songs for a while now and were anxious to record.

*

We record the EP, get Dee Dee Ramone to sing on it, and give it to Lookout. We wait around all summer for the thing to come out, doing gigs and stuff to fill out time. Meanwhile, no concrete news about the promised full-length.

Joey Ramone gets wind of us, and does some special guest appearances. He tells me he wants to sing on the album, and maybe even produce a song or two.

Punk rock!

September comes around and the EP comes out. We are thrilled. It sounds great, and looks better.

I call Lookout and ask them how the thing is selling. They say "great."

I call Mordam. The distributor. Same answer. In fact, Mordam tells us our record has broken their "top 35."

We are happy.

I e-mail Molly a few times, and ask her when we can start our record. She kinda stalls, and tells me she'll talk to me when she's here in New York for CMJ, and the Lookout showcase, which we weren't invited to play.

When I asked Molly why, she told me the night was already filled up. I kinda thought it was strange that they were having a Lookout show in my own hometown, and I was on their label, but not invited to play. Whatever.

I talk to Chris out in San Francisco about some ideas for the band I was excited about, and he said to call Molly at her hotel and schedule a meeting.

*

So the Lookout CMJ night happens and somehow I manage to introduce Molly and Cathy (another girl who works at Lookout) to Joey and Dee Dee Ramone. They both tell the girls how much they like Furious George and wanna be on our album. I figure that oughta show Molly I mean business. Getting the Ramones to vouch for me, and volunteer to be on our record.

I ask Molly during the night about our record, and she tells me to talk to her after the show.

I wait. Biting my tongue.

After the show I approach Molly, and ask her to talk to me about doing our record like she said we could. She tells me she is really busy with all the Lookout bands in town, and to call her at her hotel. That we'll get together and work things out. I call her hotel. I fax her hotel. I call her hotel again.

And again.

I leave plenty of messages. She returns none of them before going back home to California.

*

As soon as I know Molly and Cathy are back in Berkeley, I call them there. Eventually, I talk to Molly, who tells me that she'll get working on our record and that she's sorry. I tell her I would have liked to see her in New York. She's sorry about that, too.

A couple of weeks pass and I kinda get pissed. Molly hasn't called and we wanna do our record, like they said we were gonna do. I talk to studios, set aside some time, and the band is ready to roll. We wanna record and then get our asses out and tour.

Shit.

It's October, which is when Molly said we'd start recording our full-length. So I write her a long email letter. I tell her about all the cool ideas I have for the band and stuff, how excited I am, and ask her if we can get this thing rolling.

She writes me back a letter, and tells me "You're moving too fast, and you should tour the East Coast and build up a following first."

Huh?

So I again bite my tongue, it bleeds, and we tour the East Coast a bit.

I e-mail her our show dates, and just try to keep the lines of communication open.

Molly doesn't respond, so I call her, after sending numerous e-mails. Very nice ones, I might add. I went out of my way to be nice at all times. I figured maybe they were having a tough time, and remembered what Tim and Ben said about them. Honest and nice. So I was too.

*

"Hi George," says Molly, in a harried voice.

I ask Molly what is going on and she says that things have been hectic, what with the Queers, Green Day, and the opening of the new store, and whatever, and they haven't gotten around to discussing us yet.

I feel my blood start to boil.

Hello? It's been like seven months now. Where the fuck is our record deal? Of course, I don't say any of this. I just ask her when we can expect our contract. She says

she'll make Furious George a "number one priority" over at Lookout, and soon we'll be recording.

Finally, I'm satisfied.

Of course, it's not that easy.

Never could be.

This is Lookout.

I don't hear from Molly, and start to bug her by e-mail again. Finally, I get a note from her telling me to contact Larry Livermore directly. She even gives me his e-mail address. She tells me that Larry is being "un-receptive" and that I should talk to him personally.

So I try to.

I sit down and write Larry a long, long e-mail. I explain that Tim and Ben recommended me to him, and that I want to be on Lookout (even though I was starting to have doubts in my mind). I tell him I'd appreciate a response.

See, I tried contacting Larry earlier, by leaving messages on his answering machine, and by writing him other letters. He never responded. The only time I ever really "talked" with him was on AOL, in a chat room.

Wonderful.

Finally I get an email back from Larry. I feel my ulcers start up as I read it. In the letter he is nice and all, but tells me that "while it might seem a logical step to go straight to the top, as you may think you are doing in writing directly to me, in terms of actually accomplishing your goal, my ability to help is limited."

What the fuck? Molly told me to write him. Geezus.

I read the letter more and Larry basically says although he owns the label, he doesn't make the decisions, Molly and Chris do.

Hello? Hello? *Hello?*

*

So I'm now full-out pissed. Molly told me to contact Larry. I did what she said. He tells me to contact Molly. So now I am.

"Hi Molly," I say to Molly on the phone in California, "It's me, George."

I tell her that I just got an e-mail from Larry, and what the fuck?

She tells me she saw it, and is sorry. I ask her why Larry said to talk to her, and she told me she doesn't know.

By now I've had enough. This good cop/bad cop routine was really wearing me down.

My stomach hurt, my band wanted to record, but not at this price. Not at the price of lies and misinformation.

I demand from Molly to know what the fuck is going on. I tell her that I feel we are being misled, and what the fuck?

She starts to tell me about openness and honesty, and how I can call her anytime and call her names if I feel bad about what is going on at the label. She tells me Joe "King" Queer and Ben used to do it all the time. Call her a "cunt," "asshole" and "jerk."

She tells me that that makes them feel better, and has an openness to it that helps both parties express themselves.

Fucking Californians.

They're fucking nuts.

I tell her I'm not gonna call her names, because I don't want to waste my breath, and besides, I wasn't raised that way. I just want to know what is going on with my record.

Then she finally told me.

Somehow she explained to me that Furious George was not going to be doing a full-length on Lookout, even though they *promised* it to us

Twice.

She said that Larry doesn't like the idea of the band being on the label, and that was that. She said she was really sorry. I asked her how come she didn't tell me this earlier, lied to us about why our record was held up, and then she apologized for "stringing us along."

Holy shit. She knew that we weren't gonna be signed for awhile.

I flipped.

I asked her again why she didn't tell me this earlier, and she just said she was sorry. Sorry for leading us on and wasting our time.

But "sorry" wasn't good enough. We had waited like seven or eight months, and believed in them. Believed they were honest like Tim and Ben said. And they were now acting as bad as a major label. Or worse. Fuckers.

Molly then told me again I could scream at her and call her a "cunt" if it would make me feel better. I didn't want to give her the satisfaction. I asked her why the band was not being signed, and what was I gonna tell people. She said she had no answer.

Weren't we selling well?

She said we were selling really well.

Don't you like the music?

She said they did.

Haven't we worked hard like I said we would? She agreed we had. (We did all the artwork for the EP, we made, paid for, and sent out our own posters advertising the EP, and we made and paid for our own ad in *MRR*).

I asked her if it was because we were "too" punk, or that I wrote for *Maximumrocknroll*, or what?

She had no answer, but kinda said yes when I mentioned *MRR*. I had a feeling about that.

But whatever.

The label was being dishonest, and I was really hurt. I said, "Hey Molly, ya gotta give me a reason why you are not signing us. If you don't put out our record everyone will think we can't sell, or that we fucked you guys, but in reality, you are fucking us." She said she had no answer, but that she hopes our relationship can continue because of the EP, and that I can call her for advice anytime I want. I hung up the phone on the verge of tears.

*

So there we were, Furious George, with no full-length out. And that's the story between us and Lookout. And why we didn't do a full record with them.

I still haven't quite figured out the reason, and maybe they haven't either. I think it has to do with me writing for *MRR*, my friendship with Tim and Ben, and Larry being a prick.

Tim and Ben both apologized a lot and told me they were hurt they even recommended me to Lookout.

There is a lot more that Ben said that I feel uncomfortable repeating. It is not my place to say those things, it is his.

I was happy when Tim and Ben said I should go to Lookout. From the surface they seemed like the best label around. Now, from where I sit, they look like the rest of the corporate labels. No better. No worse. And that sucks.

In an ideal world, I'd love to see everyone work together, and strive for what we all started doing this for in the beginning. A belief in our friends, and that we can make things better. By working together. Make a difference. If that difference is only in the amount of money in our pockets, count me out.

*

So there I am having the same dream again. Only a little different.

I was there, in the warm California sun, on a street in Berkeley. I again was holding hands. Only, this time it was with my ex. And around me was Tim, Ben, Nick, and my band, Evan and Michael. We were walking together, and we saw lots of punk rockers. They were all glad to see us, and we were glad to see them. Then we stopped at a game of hopscotch chalked in on the sidewalk. I looked at it, then at my ex. She nodded her head and we walked past it.

Everyone clapped.

I looked again at her and Tim and Ben and Nick and Evan and Michael. They all

had warm glows around them. And they all smiled. Then I looked next to them and saw Obi-Wan Kenobi, Yoda, and Darth Vader without his mask. They were smiling too.

Hey, it's a dream.

I smiled back to everyone.

Then I looked down at my sneakers.

Instead I saw I was wearing Judy Garland shoes.

So I'm from New York. I got a leather jacket with US pins, and Judy Garland shoes. So what. I'll still kick yer ass.

Anyway, I tap them together, three times, and say, "There's no place like home, there's no place like home, there's no place like home." And then there's this big tornado, and I see the Wicked Witch of the West ride by on his broom, and when I look at his face, I see it's Larry. And he's laughing. Laughing at me. And I laugh back at him. Knowing he can't hurt me anymore.

Then I wake up. Back in Kansas. On the farm. And there's my ex. And Uncle Tim. And Uncle Ben. And brothers Michael and Evan. And Poppa Nick. And they are all around my bed, telling me it was just a dream. That California is the land of make believe, and doesn't exist. I sigh with relief. Then Aunt Larry and Uncle Molly pop their heads in my window, with a contract that says "Lookout" on it, and I scream "Noooooooooooo!"

Take My Life, Please.

Endnotes:

1. Thank God for Todd and Recess Records who picked up the slack for Furious George right away.
2. I think the point I'm trying to make about punk rock and big business is it's okay if everyone involved knows the deal. It's when the lying and cheating your friends starts up that it is way fucked up.
3, After this article ran, it caused a lot of hurt feelings to a lot of people. I'm not sorry I wrote this, and in the end, all the artists on Lookout! agreed I did the right thing. Even Larry said I did. And I respect him for that.
4. Thinking about all of this really makes me miss Tim Yohannan.
5. Last I heard, Molly was managing the Donnas, and the Queers wrote a nasty song about her. But you know what? I hope she's fine and healthy these days, and can look back and reflect on what happened.
6. Peace to everyone and whether punk is huge or underground, I don't really care. It's my music. It's your music. It's our music. We have to love it sort of like a child. After all, many of us did give birth to it. Especially Maximumrocknroll. And like all parents, I'm sure we made mistakes "raising" our kids. But again, that's part of life. And it's all okay.
7. Congrats MRR, on your grown up baby! Mosel-Tov Cocktail! And of course, Punk Rock!

LA, the Gays, Butterflies and My Father

I recently went down to LA for a *Best Gay Erotica* reading. I was this year's judge, and in my introduction at the reading I declared a not-quite-so-hidden agenda. First of all, I stated, I would like to destroy erotica. Now, what do I mean by that? Well, "erotica" generally means stereotyped, overwrought, simplistic writing about sex that feels more like shopping for just the right brand of—windshield wiper fluid—than exploring the outermost reaches of desire. In the case of writing by and for so-called gay men, erotica comes with the assumption that unquestioning masculinity take its place in the preeminent space in the pantheon of the gods. Now, not only am I interested in dragging masculinity down where we can challenge, transform—and, sure—touch it, but I'm also interested in sex writing that's a little more open, honest, desperate, fucked up, messy, and dangerous.

Furthermore, of course, I declared that I want to destroy "gay." Now, what do I mean by that? Well, gay has come to mean "pick me up at the Pottery Barn in the brand-new Victory Red Hummer H3, so we can all-terrain it over to see *Brokeback Mountain* for the sixteenth time before the Oscars and shed a few tears in the dark, then hit a few pedestrians on the way to gulp down several Sex on the Dryers—but not too many, hubbie—because we've gotta get up in the morning and go to work at Community Marketing." Now, I'm interested in something that's a little more deviant, defiant, delicious, and... devastating.

The reading in LA was a double feature with *The Wild Creatures*, collected stories of Sam D'Allesandro edited posthumously by Kevin Killian. I chose stories by both Sam and Kevin for *Best Gay Erotica*, and it was exciting to combine the two books for the event, because Sam D'Allesandro was one of many queer writers who I discovered in the early '90s either shortly before or shortly after their deaths due to AIDS (Sam died in 1988). Although Sam died before I could meet him, his work—and the work of other queer writers, activists, and artists who died around the same time, people like Bo Huston, Marlon Riggs, David Feinberg, Derek Jarman, Cookie Mueller, and especially David Wojnarowicz (who comes the closest to an icon for me), helped me to feel that maybe I could create a little bit of hope in a world of loss. Reading from Sam's work, I realized that he died when he was 33. I'm 32 now.

The reading was especially successful, fun, and moving because it was both sexy and serious, polished and provocative. Afterwards, someone asked me if I ever got tired of touring, and I think I answered by saying that readings gave me energy, which is kind of true except that beforehand I'm always completely exhausted, wondering how I can possibly make it happen. Then afterwards I feel high, until I crash and have to figure out how to face the world again.

You see, I have all this crazy chronic pain and chronic exhaustion, lately grouped under the diagnosis of fibromyalgia, which basically means pain all over your body and an inability to get restful sleep. For me, it has a lot to do with being sexually abused by my father as a kid—I stored all my father's rage in my body and I've yet to figure out how to purge myself. Plus, I never learned how to relax while sleeping, since I was always waiting for my father to drag me out of bed to rape me.

All of the pain and exhaustion make it especially complicated to tour, since it's hard for me to carry anything really, and I have to eat all the time because I'm vegan and hypoglycemic, and I need somewhere comfortable and quiet to sleep... But then the reading starts, and I'm filled with so much calm thrilling drive. I kind of need that high to keep going. It's how I do anything in my life, really; I live entirely on will—if I lost that then I'd lose everything.

I stayed with my sister in LA. She lives in West Hollywood. Outside her apartment I watched these tiny squirrels scurry at a 90-degree angle up to the top of these enormous palm trees—looking for food, I imagine—and then they scurried right back down. It was pretty amazing, birds were chirping too—I don't know how all these creatures stay alive with all the pollution. Then I found the cruising, which was at some random residential intersection on La Jolla a few blocks below Santa Monica Boulevard, cars driving around in circles. I

had sex with some guy in his car; afterwards the windows were fogged and then he said he lived in Orange County because there were too many gay people in West Hollywood. Unfortunately, he wasn't critiquing the tragedy of rabid gay consumerism, he just looked disgusted and trapped and desperate and ashamed and I asked him for a ride back to my sister's house anyway. Even a few blocks in LA is a long walk.

My sister's apartment is long and spacious—you can be at one end and not even know that someone else is at the other. It was pretty relaxing to stay there and not worry about much except cooking and going out to dinner with my sister. I was only there for a few days, but by the end of my visit I got scared of returning home. In LA, except for the reading, I didn't have to think so much about everything I want to do and how to make it happen. Like how to get the writing and the politics that are important to me out in the world, how to make a living from writing (ha!), how to face the horrible progression the world is taking. I thought about Sam D'Allesandro, how if I was him I would be dead just about now.

Even though sometimes when my father was raping me and I could feel my body split in half, I thought I was dead, could float away through the chimney like a butterfly—later, I still didn't want to die. I mean, not until I was ready—I can't imagine being ready.

My father has cancer now, it's what they call terminal—he probably won't live for more than a few years. My sister and I didn't really talk about it much in LA. It's hard to—she's never dealt with the abuse. I mean, she doesn't think it happened to her, though she was certainly in the same house. She still talks to my father, our father—he's still her father, not really mine. I haven't talked to him in ten years, since I confronted him and told him we couldn't speak unless he could admit to sexually abusing me. Now he's dying—I know that some people, when they realize they're dying they change things in their lives or make incredible art or go through some sort of transformation, but I don't think that will happen with my father. He's had every possible means for dealing with sexually abusing me—he's a psychiatrist—and he's chosen to deny everything.

So it was hard, staying at my sister's house with this ghost that will be our father who we both can see but not really.

Mattilda, a.k.a. Matt Bernstein Sycamore is the editor, most recently, of That's Revolting! Queer Strategies for Resisting Assimilation *(Soft Skull 2004) and the author of* Pulling Taffy *(Suspect Thoughts 2003). Mattilda lives for feedback, so send her love letters and/or delicious threats via the recently updated www.mattbernsteinsycamore.com, which includes past* MRR *columns. Or write to PO Box 640047, San Francisco, CA 94164-0047.*

Bob woke up so hung over from last night's orgy that the only way he could get right was to snort a little coke. Next he downloaded some senior sex porn, caught the latest jihadi agitprop on his favorite Al Qaeda web sites and zipped through a school zone doing 100 in his unregistered, uninsured car. Bob leads a lifestyle that you'd assume would make him a fierce advocate of privacy rights. But it's possible to imagine a society in which Bob wouldn't need to keep anything secret.

Privacy advocates point to gays and political dissidents when asked to justify the importance of anonymity on the Internet. Civil libertarians say that freedom from unreasonable searches prevents America from becoming a police state. Yet these examples demonstrate an unintended and rarely discussed consequence of the privacy rights movement: Privacy enables oppression by promoting social stigmas.

What if Bob's neighbors, friends and colleagues were sexually nonjudgmental? He could hook up with anyone he wanted to without fear of reprisal. Bob needn't worry about the police searching his car, if drugs were legal. If Bob lived in a non-dysfunctional political environment whose popular and self-confident government and citizens chose not to fear but to embrace dissent as an essential part of constructive discourse, no one would consider the books he borrowed from the library "subversive." He would have no more reason to care about the USA Patriot Act than his government would have to use it to examine his library records.

Draconian drug laws, neo-Puritan views of sex and political intolerance are forms of social and legal disapproval that create scapegoats, hermits and fugitives. Consider, for example, the closeted gay man. Fearing the opprobrium of family, coworkers and (in some states) the police, his sole consolation is his belief that his "M4M" web posts will stay between him and his Internet service provider. In communities where large numbers of gays refuse to limit their public appearances to leather bars on the bad side of town, and increasingly step forward, other people are forced to recognize their behavior as not aberrant and, for a significant portion of the population (between three and six percent for American men, somewhat lower among women), not uncommon and even quite normal. Their gayness becomes more widely accepted. Were the violators of other social and legal norms to refuse to hide their activities, their nonconformity would similarly be normalized.

Naturally these musings on the perverse relationship between privacy rights and oppression ignore some harsh realities. First, tribalism is a hard-wired human survival mechanism that is difficult to reroute. We are reflexively drawn to the similar and repulsed by the anomalous and the other. Second, before discriminated-upon social segments like homosexuals can summon the courage to make their presence public they must first find comfort in the anonymity of life underground. Finally, history shows that even relatively egalitarian and nonjudgmental societies can regress into willful intolerance. In those places privacy rights must be preserved precisely because one never knows what viciousness the future will bring.

After a few brief decades of social progress the United States has lurched back into the dark ages of torture, concentration camps, and police harassment of its scapegoats and undesirables—current members: Muslims, blacks, gays, leftists. The result has been to remind us why the right to be left alone in our homes, cars and email is still necessary.

A grand irony is that individuals, who need more protection than ever thanks to the ease of information access and transfer in the electronic era, are losing what few privacy rights they have to government officials who, despite drawing salaries from us taxpayers, are acting increasingly secretive. Even as Congress approved the once unthinkable renewal of the Patriot Act's "library provision," which grants government spooks access to your business records, medical files, purchase records and library borrowings, an Associated Press survey found that "states have steadily limited the public's access to government information since the 9/11 terrorist attacks."

Out of the thousand-plus laws passed by state legislatures concerning informa-

tion access since 9/11, nearly two-thirds "restricted access to government records, databases, meetings and more." The rest made access easier or had no net effect. Hungry for more irony? Government officials say they're keeping records—*our* public records, which we pay for—private for our own sake. "There's a push by government that every time Joe Citizen's name is mentioned in a government document, it's an inherent threat to Joe Citizen's privacy if that document is mentioned," says Charles Davis of the Freedom of Information Center.

They even used that excuse to "disappear" prisoners held at the Guantánamo Bay concentration camp. "Personal information on detainees was withheld solely to protect detainee privacy and for their own security," claimed Lieutenant Commander Chito Peppler of the Department of Defense, saying that disclosure "could result in retribution or harm to the detainees or their families." The real "harm" from disclosure would come to the United States, when their families learned that their loved ones were being brutalized.

With government officials like that, it's easy to see why some of us still have to sneak around.

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NEW BOOK: *Attitude 3: The New Subversive Online Cartoonists* (NBM Publishing, 128 pp., price $13.95), comes out next month. You can preorder the book at any bookstore or comics shop, or on the Internet. It includes cartoons by and interviews with 21 amazing web cartoonists, some political and others hilarious. *Attitude 3* is a great primer on the sometimes-perplexing world of web cartoons and shows an amazing range of artistic creativity.

I got to have my say in last issue's feature section on the business of punk. Frequent readers of my column will note that it's like a "*Wall St. Journal* of Punk" as I often cover business issues and behind-the-scenes angles of DIY hardcore. This month I will add even more musings on said topics.

I frequently look at bands/labels/deals going down in the scene today and think to myself "Tim Yo would call bullshit on that." As I alluded to last issue, Tim Yo was one of the only people who really stood up for DIY ethics and was respected. I feel like Kent and Lisa at Ebullition, the staff at *MRR*, and Chris at *Slug and Lettuce* are some of the last bastions of 1980s-style DIY ethics still taken somewhat seriously. Even then, not too many people seem willing to call a spade a spade these days. The commercialization of punk has become so overwhelming that few people seem to remember a time when it was different.

I probably sell thousands of records less than I could these days because I still refuse to do a lot of things that most labels do as a matter of course. I won't hire a publicist or pay to get my bands covered in magazines. I won't put UPC codes on my releases and I don't put my label logo on the back of t-shirts. I won't give away records on consignment to distributors who might go out of business without paying me (I learned that one the hard way), I won't do music videos, and I don't advertise on "punk porn" sites. I don't sell my band's test pressings on eBay, I don't have an "exclusive" distribution deal or any financial backing, I don't have a Myspace page, etc.

I've seen my objective of having a "big" 1980s-style hardcore label meet with some very mixed results. In the past few years, costs have continued to rise, but sales of independent releases have plummeted. I work twice as hard and spend about 50% more money to sell the same number of records in 2005 as I did four years ago. I constantly watch what other labels are doing, try to keep a keen eye on changes in the "market," and adapt to them without completely selling my soul to corporate America. Ultimately I feel like I've struck a balance between the traditional DIY values of late-'80s/early-'90s hardcore (when things were at their least commercial) and the hyper-commercialized modern hardcore scene. Am I happy with the way things have developed? No. Will I hang in there and see if I can come out with some integrity after other labels have failed or sold out? I hope so.

One thing that has struck me is how much lower the "ceiling" is in underground music today. In the '80s, a well-known hardcore band (say DRI, MDC, or Crucifix) could easily sell 10,000–20,000 copies of a solid LP. And those bands didn't attract major label interest and stayed on independent labels. Today, even the best bands sell a fraction of that, despite the fact that punk is more widespread and popular than ever (albeit more diverse). Now, any hardcore band selling even 5–10,000 records is attracting serious major label interest and any band selling 3–5,000 is getting picked up by a major indie. From the band's perspective, an argument frequently made is that tour after tour, album after album, their audience is the same 2,000 people and to break through the DIY glass ceiling they need to sign to a "major indie" label to get the distribution, promotion, publicity and booking doors to open for them. In the '80s, the rule of thumb was that a band needed to sell at least 100,000 records to be worth signing to a major label. Epitaph turned that model upside down by using a tech-savvy, motivated workforce to make a respectable profit off records that sold 30–50,000 copies. But since those days of early '90s pop punk and "chugga chugga" metalcore, the number of sales to elicit major label interest seems to have dropped to a fraction what it was.

A scene is emerging where a handful of hype-driven labels can sell out a pressing of 200-500 records in a few days and then it's left to the secondary (eBay) market to distribute them at three times their original price. Or on the other hand, a band is forced to sign to a major indie or even major label to sell more than 3,000 records. In the middle ground are the survivors of the late-'80s/early-'90s DIY hardcore label scene: Havoc, Prank, Six Weeks, and Sound Pollution. I'm not too intimate with Six Weeks or Sound Pollution these days, and still have mixed feelings about both labels doing an exclusive distribution deal with Mordam. But I do talk frequently with Ken of Prank. I feel our labels are "stuck" in the middle ground between small pressing cult labels driven by internet hype, and larger indie labels (Fat, Jade Tree, Touch and Go, Dischord, etc.) which have significant financial resources and to one degree or another "play the game" with major label distributors, publicists, booking agencies, and so forth. Indeed, I think Prank and Havoc are the only two labels of some size left with no ties to major labels through our distribution. I still respect Six Weeks and Sound Pollution, but I'm a little concerned about their continuing exclusive distribution through Mordam and its ties to Warner Brothers. This is an issue I'd like to see an industry insider explore in these pages.

For Prank and Havoc it's a fight to stay afloat. Both our labels are doing big budget full-length releases, usually for fairly experienced bands. Sales continue to slide but we refuse to raise our prices or cross

over to the dark side. Both of us have done a lot of things like limited collector's editions to help promote our releases and raise some extra cash. But I often wonder if there's any space left for labels like ours. If most people don't care if a band/label is on or distributed by a major, why do we still fight for independence? If no band can sell more than 2,000 records without signing, maybe we'd be better off doing 7"s in editions of 500 and call it a day, instead of keeping releases in print for a decade. I know in times of frustration both Ken and I have told each other "this is the last year I'm doing this, I give up" but then we hear a new band that blows us away and get back in the game every time. Like the gangster in the movies gone straight whose old life keeping sucking him back in, I'm addicted to fast '82 hardcore and Swedish raw punk. I can't let true ragers go unreleased or gamble on another label handling something I feel like I was born to release. I know the people at Six Weeks, Prank, and Sound Pollution are diehard music lovers doing what they do for the music and not for the money. None of us are getting rich off this, or even making a living without a day job off the label. But I wonder if times are passing us by.

I spent the last five years trying to build up the profile and distribution of my label. In 2001 I thought that there was no reason a band like Tear It Up, DS 13, or Nine Shocks Terror couldn't sell 10–20,000 records like hardcore bands in the '80s did, if they just had the right label pushing them. Now I feel like that was a typically idealistic daydream and I'm extremely lucky to sell 3–4,000 of even the most popular band. And most likely they will leave the label for a more prestigious one at that. I've realized that to take the label to the "next level" I'd have to become more like Fat or Epitaph and less like what I set out to do. The recognition that my hard work was mostly in vain is depressing, but I do feel like I've survived with some integrity and will continue to adapt and release records for years to come, on whatever scale the true believers out there will support.

Ultimately, DIY hardcore will survive this current wave of commercialism in some form or another. I feel like the music business is due for some serious shake-ups and a lot of labels and distributors will go under with the next economic downturn. In the future, a scene might emerge that's more local, more DIY, and more grassroots than what we have now. Probably all of us will be better off for it. Perhaps someday we'll view the early 21st century as some kind of anomaly like the "crossover" or "Nirvana" eras where major labels took some interest in punk then moved on to another trend.

"Free speech, free speech for the dumb"

—Discharge

Indeed, even the dumb, misguided and bigoted have the right to say what they want. Well, unless you dare to go against the grain of the what's acceptable by the current fascist regime. This segment isn't about the clampdown on civil liberties, though. It's about stoking the fires over the airwaves and other outlets, as well as "real life." I try not to listen to right-wing radio, but do hear recorded evidence of their warped viewpoints from time to time, usually through sound clips on other shows or from various websites. As the old saying goes, hearing is believing.

ITEM: A female college student and exotic dancer, who was hired to perform at an off-campus party, was allegedly raped recently by three members of the Duke University lacrosse team. It's since been revealed that one of the students, Colin Finnerty, was also charged last fall for assaulting a man in Washington, DC, according to the *New York Times*. While discussing the case, talk host Rush Limbaugh referred to the young woman as a "ho." The transcript of his show (courtesy of MediaMatters.org) has Limbaugh saying that "the lacrosse team... uh, supposedly, you know, raped, some, uh, hos," during a conversation with a listener. The next caller called him on it and Limbaugh backed down, calling it a "slip of the tongue" and that he was "running on fumes" that day...

ITEM: There was a recent incident involving Congresswoman Cynthia McKinney from Georgia. She got into a physical altercation with a Capitol police officer when she was stopped after walking around a security checkpoint. She wasn't wearing her lapel pin that identifies her as a member of Congress and that's why the officer confronted her. Reports have said he physically stopped her and she retaliated. As of this writing, she could be facing charges of assault on the officer. McKinney is one of the leading progressives in the House and, obviously, is a lightning rod for right-wingers. Since McKinney is African-American, some have wondered if the same thing would have happened if her skin had been a different color.

In any case, this incident brought out some ugly sentiments, especially from talk host Neal Boortz. Following the incident, Boortz said that McKinney "looks like a ghetto slut." He went on to say, regarding McKinney's hairstyle, "It looks like an explosion in a Brillo pad factory. It's just hideous." He also said, "I saw Cynthia McKinney's hairdo yesterday—saw it on TV. I don't blame that cop for stopping her. It looked like a welfare drag queen was trying to sneak into the Longworth House Office Building. That hairdo is ghetto trash. I don't blame them for stopping her." He did try to put it into a self-deprecating context, since he says he gets teased about being bald. Still, there's no missing the racist intent there, even if Boortz denies it. Boortz did offer an apology a few days later.

ITEM: Following the release of Jill Carroll, the *Christian Science Monitor* reporter who was held captive in Iraq for nearly three months, Bernard McGuirk, executive producer of the Don Imus radio show, offered these pearls of wisdom on the air (once again, according to the show's transcript, this time recorded by thinkprogress.org): "She strikes me as the kind of woman who would wear one of those suicide vests. You know, walk into the—try and sneak into the Green Zone... She may be carrying Habib's baby at this point... She's like the Taliban Johnny or something." Imus and co-host Charles McCord did take issue with McGuirk's comments and a lot of it is set up for outrage (it's radio, after all). I stopped listening to Imus's show quite a while ago, but heard about McGuirk's comments on a local issues show ("Greater Boston," on the local PBS station) that has a media coverage segment every Friday. None of this surprises me. Imus has referred to McGuirk as a "bald Nazi" in the past.

As I indicated in the last paragraph, it's meant as radio "entertainment" and appeals to a certain audience—mainly white, conservative males who probably have a lot of insecurity about their place in the world and feel put-upon by the "politically correct." Oh, those poor guys. That's probably not their entire listenership, but I don't think it's far from the mark.

Around here there's a sports station, WEEI, which is referred to by VP of programming Jason Wolfe as "guy radio." It's a ratings success, the top-rated station in the market for all adults from 25-54. The sports

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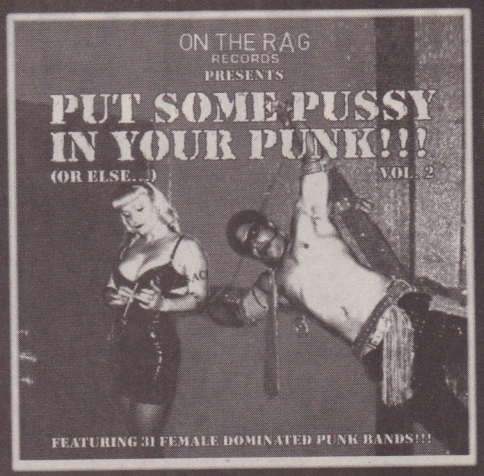

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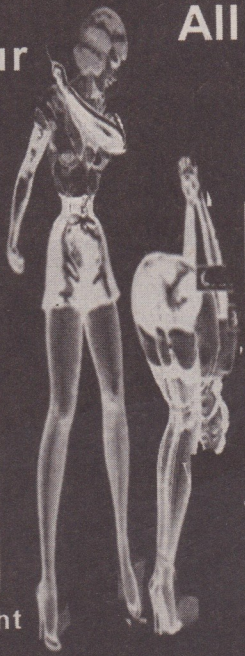

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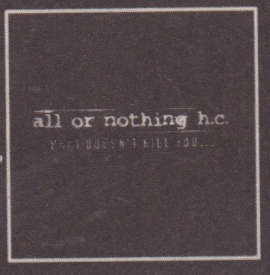

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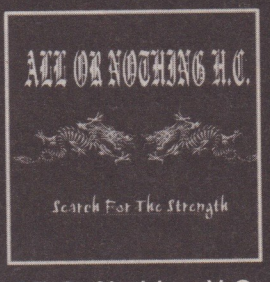

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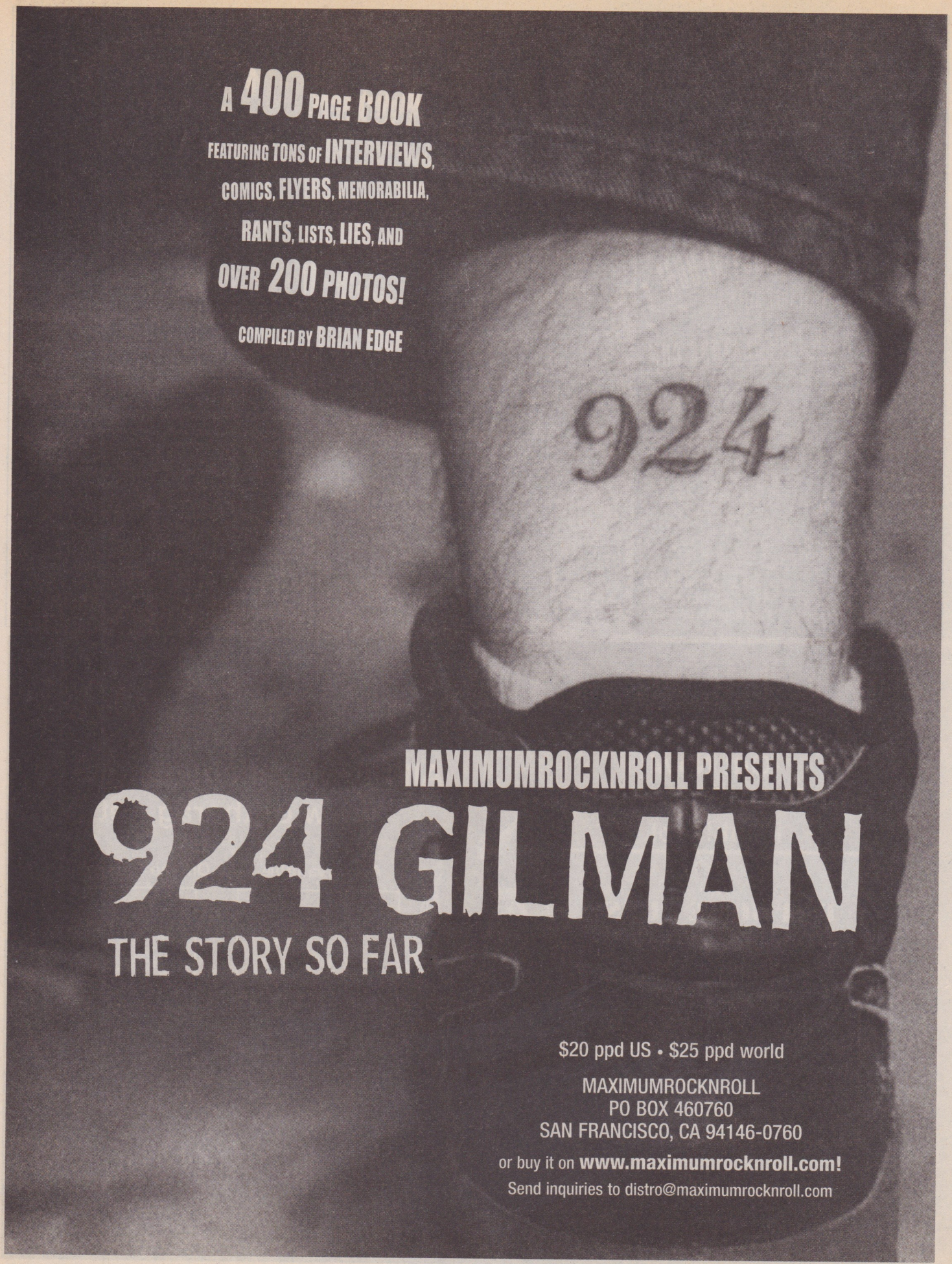
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orientation is the obvious draw, since the two teams they mainly talk about, the Patriots (football) and the Red Sox (baseball), have passionate followings. Still, it's most certainly male-oriented. There aren't a lot of female callers to the shows and there are no female hosts. When the station switched to all sports about 12 years ago, there was briefly a female co-host, Janet Prensky, but she was quickly jettisoned. Smarmy comments about women's sports, such as when the women's NCAA tournament came to Boston, are commonplace.

I'm a sports fan—I know a lot of MRR readers have issues with competitive sports and hate jock types—but I'm not like that. I just enjoy watching the games. I listen to some of WEEI's programming, except the morning show, hosted by a couple of right-wingers, John Dennis and Gerry Callahan. I used to listen but got tired of their political harangues. Callahan, in particular, is vicious in his viewpoints and it's no joke, no acting. I once heard him refer to gay people as "perverts," for instance.

In 2003, D&C, as they're known, got into some hot water over racially insensitive comments and ended up getting suspended for two weeks. While discussing a story about a gorilla who escaped from a local zoo and was later captured near a bus stop, Dennis referred to him as a "METCO gorilla," in reference to a program that buses inner-city children, mainly African-American, to the suburbs. The two hosts were yukking it up.

ITEM (last one for now... I promise): The *Boston Globe*, in order to counteract the more liberal comic strips it runs, such as "Doonesbury," "Non-Sequitur," "Boondocks" and "Sylvia," to name a few, has the conservative strip "Mallard Fillmore," drawn by Bruce Tinsley. Tinsley's far-right strip is seldom funny and often trades in crude stereotypes.

Recently, he drew a series of strips dealing with freshman Senator Tom Coburn from Oklahoma. Tinsley praised Coburn for his fiscal conservatism in fighting "pork-barreling" on both sides of the aisle. I suppose I can agree with the idea of cutting down on political corruption (good luck). Mallard even thinks he should be president.

The record on Coburn isn't so great. In fact, he's virulently anti-choice, anti-gay and he also made a tactless racial comment. During his 2004 electoral campaign, Coburn said the choice between the Democratic opponent and himself was a choice between "good and evil." During a debate for that campaign he also said, according to a CNN report, that "black males are being penalized by the Social Security system because they had a *genetic predisposition to have less of a life expectancy* (emphasis mine)." This set off a shitstorm because some construed that statement as saying African-Americans were genetically inferior. Even if the intent wasn't racist, it still showed a lack of sensitivity.

During that campaign, Coburn was also quoted as saying he favored the death penalty for "abortionists." Coburn, a physician (much like the fascistic Bill Frist, a potential presidential candidate) may have to kill himself because he performed two abortions. OK, maybe not, since the abortions were within his parameters of when it was appropriate. Here are of his feelings on the "life" issue, from a July 2002 AP report: *"He said he performed two abortions to save the lives of mothers who had congenital heart disease, but opposes the procedure in cases of rape. 'Under the mores we live under today, my lineage wouldn't exist,' Coburn said, explaining that his great-grandmother was raped by a territorial sheriff."*

So, great, his great-grandmother had to suffer the indignity of carrying a child to term of a man who had sexually violated her. Of course, we're probably talking a hundred or so years ago and that was long before women had many rights, including the right to vote. One wonders what she would have done in modern times. At least she would have the option to have an abortion. And, to be quite crude about it, maybe the world would have been spared one less regressive extremist.

As for gay issues, Coburn is opposed to gay marriage and domestic partnerships. While he was a congressman, Coburn was one of the representatives who refused to fund the implementation of domestic partnerships in the District of Columbia, and he also fought to prevent gay/lesbian adoption. He's been quoted as saying, "The gay community has infiltrated the very centers of power in every area across this country, and they wield extreme power…Why do you think we see the rationalization for abortion and multiple sexual partners? That's a gay agenda." Oh it is, is it? Somehow, I don't think multiple sexual partners are necessarily restricted to gay couples. But his paranoia about the "gay community" speaks volumes.

You get the idea. Tinsley, the illustrator of the fictitious duck, wants Coburn to be president. There's always this talk from the right how about liberals and progressives are out of touch with mainstream heartland values and are on a mission to destroy America and all of that claptrap. If Coburn is a reflection of what's considered a "maverick," someone whom Bruce Tinsley and others would consider a valid presidential candidate, if he gets serious consideration (or Bill Frist, for that matter), then this country is in a lot worse trouble than it already is, if they get elected—or *selected*, that is.

Free speech for the dumb, indeed...

Department of Corrections:

Before moving on to the record reviews, I need to correct a few things from my last column. "Rock Bottom," partially covered by Vitamin X, was originally done by UFO, not Montrose. And Instant Asshole's song is "Make Fuck, Buy War," not "Make Fuck, Not War." Carry on...

Reviews:

ARMY OF JESUS – *Prosperity, Health, Finance, Wealth* (BSD, 7" EP)

This band kicked it hard last summer when they played at the Harvard Social Forum in Cambridge, and their first EP was killer. Army Of Jesus's second 7" is no disappointment, either. Early '80s-inspired thrashy hardcore, with catchy riffs, and Doug's vocals are nice 'n' hoarse. (716-b Harris Ave., Austin, TX 78705, bsdrecords@gmail.com)

AUKTION – *D-Beat R'n'R Mayhem* (Wasted Sounds, CD)

Dual-vocal rockin' rollin' hardcore from Scandinavia. It starts with a parody of the intro to Black Sabbath's first album, but that's the only commonality, as the boogie riffage soon takes over. In the same vein as Uncurbed, et al. Speed and aggro, but also playing up the love for metallic rock. You might think it's a case where the guys only want to rock out, but the lyrics reveal a strong social conscience—homophobia, the surveillance state, gender roles, etc. They also do a cover of Anti-Cimex's "Raped Ass"—sort of. It's re-titled "Raped Ass Part II," with different music. (www.wasted-sounds.com)

CHRONIC SEIZURE – *Brainsick (Fashionable Idiots*, 7" EP)

Hardcore from Chicago and, as someone with a mild form of epilepsy (it's under control), the band's name brings a smile to my face. So does the full-tilt hardcore punk. Pig Champion definitely provides spiritual guidance in the guitar sound and the production is trebly as hell—bass is mainly inaudible, except when it starts "Chronic Seizure." Lyrics that express alienation and internal torment and trying to find a way to come to terms with it. The band includes people from Rat Bastards, Fourteen or Fight, and the Repos, and I was going to write that it sounded kind of like the Repos

before knowing that. Raw and wailing. PO Box 580131, Minneapolis, MN 55408, www.fashionableidiots.com)

FOR THE WORSE – *Couldn't Give Two Shits About the Kids* (Kangaroo, LP)
In case you don't know, this is the latest band to feature legendary madman/pro-wrestler Mike McCarthy (ex-A Poor Excuse) The photo on the cover is a rather literal interpretation of the title (don't ask). A high-flying hardcore punk barrage. Loud, fast, obnoxious, and hitting the mark better than a well-executed clothesline move. Songs for the rejects, the fuck-ups, and those who like to fuck things up, punctuated by belches, sound clips, and even a "knock knock" joke. For a slight change of pace, there's a cover of the Bruisers' "Never Fall," but for all the working class pride that band extolled, McCarthy turns it on its head two songs later with "Working Class Myth." Pure aggression and more than a bit dangerous, especially when you see them live. This was released on CD a few years ago on Rodent Popsicle. (Middenweg 13, 1098 AA Amsterdam, NETHERLANDS, www.geocities.com/tysonkangaroo)

46 SHORT – *Truth Denied* (TKO, CD)
By my count, this is 46 Short's third album. Tuneful hardcore punk—definitely a west coast-styled sound. The production is on the clean side (speaking as someone who likes a bit more rawness) but nice and loud. Mid-to-fast tempos, full-bodied guitars and politically oriented lyrics. Consistently high-energy. It doesn't take things to the next level or anything, but it's a solid effort. Incidentally, they keep it quiet, but the bass-player is former Final Conflict vocalist Ron Martinez. (8941 Atlanta Ave., Huntington Beach, CA 92646, www.tkorecords.com)

FUNCTIONAL BLACKOUTS – *The Severed Tongue Speaks for Everyone* (Criminal IQ, LP)
Abrasive, obnoxious, and then some. Successfully so? Yep... Tossing punk, garage, and post-punk into a mixer and churning it out with nails sticking out of the concoction. OK, pretentious writing over. Maybe. The songs follow conventional structures incorporating the elements mentioned above, yet the Blackouts still have an aura of atonal psychosis. "Gunna Get Cut" really devolves into chaos with some wild sax-skronking. Gleefully damaged. (3540 North Southport Ave., Chicago, IL 60657, www.criminaliq.com)

THE JURY - s/t (Gloom, 7" EP)
This band has improved quite a bit since their demo that came in a paper bag. It's hard to not notice the 9 Shocks influence, both in the rabid vocal delivery and hard-hitting attack that's a mix of US and Japanese hardcore styles, albeit cleaner-sounding. Completely ass-kicking and also limited. Don't snooze. (PO Box 14253, Albany, NY 12212, www.gloomrecords.com)

KNOCKDOWN (Youngblood, CD)
Straight-up youthful anger. Definitely an early '80s influence along with some later sXe hardcore influences. They keep it brief and to the point—in fact, "What's Left" starts with a vicious mosh tempo and a pretty awesome pick slide and then it goes for the speed. After about 50 seconds, it comes to an abrupt halt. I kind of wish they'd go into the mosh part again, but it ends right there. Includes their 7" and demo and set to kill. The rawness instead of over-production definitely helps. (PO Box 236, Ephrata, PA 17522, www.youngbloodrecords.com)

MOMENT OF YOUTH – *Sometimes* (Firestarter, 7" EP)
One more record by this now-defunct band. Bruising hardcore at both a medium and faster pace and "Kill Bill O'Reilly" is an obvious keeper—no lyrics printed. Maybe they're afraid O'Reilly's mindless minions will come after them. The loud sounds should keep 'em at bay, though. Rage and bile, especially in the lyrical department. (www.firestarterrecords.com)

SICK AND TIRED / GODING'S SAWED-OFF (Shock to the System/Something Wicked, 7" EP)
A split 7" and it took a while for this record to get released. Anyway, buzzsaw hardcore from both bands with nice 'n' trebly production, and each have some Japanese influences in there. That's the commonality, although there are a few slight variances—very slight. Goding's vocals are a little more psychotic sounding, although Zach from Sick and Tired doesn't sound all that sedate. Rawwww. (593 Centre St., #2, Jamaica Plain, MA 02130, www.shocktothesystemrecords.com)

UNCURBED FAMILY – *Welcome to Anarcho City* (Sound Pollution, CD)
AKA Uncurbed but you probably figured that out already. Same as always—Scandi-core played in a mid-to-fast tempo and equal parts hardcore and rock 'n' roll. Two vocalists, one in a piercing register, one gruffer. Maybe not quite as manic as some of the albums from five or six years ago but nothing to fault here, even without breaking new ground. I sound as though I'm slagging it with faint praise, but that's not the case—they still have the rage. (PO Box 11742, Covington, KY 41017, www.sound-pollution.com)

VARIOUS ARTISTS – *They Came for Your Milk Money* (New Music Revolution, CD)
Pretty good collection of international hardcore bands—well, two of them are from overseas, the Geeks are from Korea and the all-female Trust hail from Argentina. Energetic performances from just about everyone here. Youthful hardcore—well, except for Kill Your Idols, who are getting up there in age (sorry, gentlemen) and re-do their best song, "What I've Become." I suppose Insted, who cover Dag Nasty's "One To Two," aren't young either. But, hey, age doesn't matter in hardcore. One change of pace is the moodier "See The Gun" by One Against One. The Alligators do their damnedest to sound like Agnostic Front. Say Goodbye has a tougher hardcore sound without the lunkhead vibe. The other bands are Bullet Treatment, veteran band The First Step, Nothing In Return, and Shea's Rebellion. New and original? Nope... but sometimes it's fine not to tinker with the formula. (5318 East 2nd St. #670, Long Beach, CA 90803, www.newmusicrevolution.net)

VARIOUS ARTISTS – *Thrash of the Titans II* (Know, LP)
Some ragers here, although some of the bands occasionally falter on their ultra-fast songs. Thrash rules, but it needs some structure, not just wanton flailing. Riistetyt's cover of Turbonegro's "I Got Erection" is humorous and not what you'd normally expect from them. Armistice's raw peace punk fares pretty well. Vitamin X wails through their songs, one studio and two live. Deride, from Japan, doesn't disappoint with a frenzied sound—well, at least on one of the songs. The other is a pure noise assault. Speaking of noise, there's a pretty rough-sounding live "Bullshit Tantrum" from 9 Shocks Terror. Ruido does a decent cover of the Fartz' "Bible Stories." I don't know—it's really hit and miss, and there are only a handful of songs I'd probably want to hear again. (PO Box 90579, Long Beach, CA 90809, www.knowrecords.com)

(Can you Smell the Shit Rising?)
"Fucking hell," I muttered to myself, cursing this day.

I looked down at the sick yellow water as pieces of shit floated to the surface. The water level kept rising, almost spilling over the toilet bowl, and I held my breath, waiting to see if the porcelain levee would hold back the rising tide of utter doom.

Three long seconds later, my heart pounding, the water pump stopped. The sea of shit remained contained, and at least I wouldn't have to mop brown chunks off the white Formica floor.

"God damn."

It was midnight, and staring down at a bowl full of shit-water was the perfect ending to my long day. I was tired and hungry and had things to do.

I had tried to write my column about "the business of punk" during the afternoon, and then was stuck working a long evening shift, when I was originally scheduled for only a few hours. It definitely put a dent in my plans. My column was due, and I didn't have much to show for it. In the past few days I had written and erased pages of thoughts, not happy with any of it.

And now, instead of eating my bagel I had been dreaming about for hours, making tea and musing on my keyboard, I was holding back the urge to vomit, using an old plunger with toilet paper stuck to the end of it, trying to get the plumbing going again, watching chunks swirl.

Needless to say, by now I had completely lost my appetite.

It took what seemed like an eternity to unclog my apartment's one communal commode. The plumbing was old, and an amazing amount of crap seemed to be stuck in the pipes. I had to use an old plunger that hardly seemed to do anything but make gross sucking noises, while I tried to avoid getting splashed and making a mess on the floor.

It was brutal.

And, I wasn't getting any closer to finishing my column.

But standing in the small toilet room, enduring the stench of my own feces, trying to look at the smiling fat face of the Buddha my hippie roommates put on top of the toilet rather than look down at what I was doing, I realized the different questions going through my head were all the same, "Do we still have to discuss major labels and the business of punk? Does the DIY punk subculture challenge the larger capitalist structure, or just replace it with smaller capitalism? Why does the shit keep rising? What smells so fucking bad?"

As the water cleared, the answers came to me, and rather than repeat all that has already been written in part one of the series, here are my strongest thoughts on the subject (and smell) at hand.

"Is big business killing punk rock?" will always need to be a relevant issue, as long as DIY punks try to work outside of the larger capitalist culture, and even more so, build systems that challenge the dominant system's right to exist. Asking the question makes us evaluate how strong our community is, and how far business has managed to worm its way in.

On one end of the spectrum, consider a squat that puts on punk shows. The punk show itself refutes the idea that music can only be bought at the club, at a high-ticket price, and played by corporate-sponsored bands. At the squat there are no rock stars, and everyone is responsible for her own good time. Music is created by individual artists expressing themselves exactly how they want to—not just as another product, packaged and molded, another brand ready to sell.

Along with freedom of artistic expression, there is freedom of speech, and performers, speakers and booksellers can pass along information and ideas at a DIY punk show that would never be allowed in a for-profit establishment that was worried about offending a certain mindset, or allowing tables that could cut into their own profits.

The squat itself challenges the very notion of private property, taking an unused building for public use. No landlords, no masters, no thank you!

A squat, even organized just for punk shows, can set an example of what is possible when we use our collective power. Even the most seeming of concrete obstacles—the notion of private property—can be overturned when we work together towards our dreams.

Then you have the other extreme. "Punks" who work with major labels, raise prices or compromise ethics in favor of profit. They usually give many reasons for doing this, including the often-heard excuse, "getting the message out to more people."

This rationalization, like my clogged toilet bowl, is simply full of shit.

Corporations, and even smaller aspiring capitalists, destroy art and culture and, most importantly, resistance through the very act of making something that was once unique and genuine, threatening or beautiful, into just another commodity for mass consumption.

So, my message this month, and as always, fuck the capitalist bastards!

If you love punk rock, support DIY. And, if our current capitalist, patriarchal, racist, warmongering society makes you sick (as it does most punks), support resistance wherever you find it, even in the zine and record bin.

***

Endnotes: The highlight of the 11th Annual Bay Area Anarchist Bookfair was hearing Ward Churchill—well-known activist, professor, and author—speak for the first time. In the preface to his collection of essays I'm now reading, *Since Predator Came: Notes from the Struggle for American Indian Liberation* (which I picked up at the massive AK Press table), it says Churchill wrote "ten books on subjects ranging from Marxism and Native Americans to FBI wars against the Black Panthers and the American Indian Movement to cultural criticism on American literature and film. All this in fifteen years."

Ward Churchill, even from the back of the room where I had managed to squeeze myself in to see him speak, had a commanding presence. He was tall, and had long black hair, wore a Native American vest, and had dark sunglasses on the entire time he talked. I enjoyed his way of speaking, very articulate and often precise, but with energy and directness.

In response to someone's question, Churchill surprised me by saying (quoted from my memory, *not* his exact words), "The biggest problem of American liberals and activists is that they are always in solidarity with other people."

Come again?

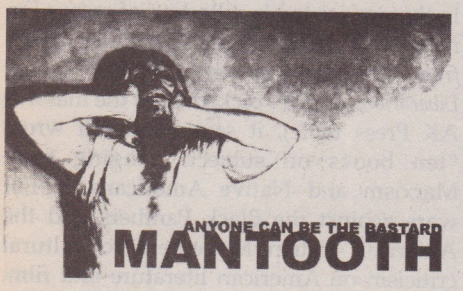
Then Churchill continued, "First it was 'US out of Vietnam.' Then, US out of Cambodia, US out of Asia, US out of South Africa, US out of Nicaragua, US out of Central America. The list goes on and on. Now, it is 'US out of Iraq' and 'US out of the Middle East.' What people should be demanding is 'US out of North America'!" and everyone in the large hall cheered. Churchill quickly continued, "We need US off the planet!"

Hell yeah!

Also, a big cheers and hello to the Bremen (Germany) punks who invaded Oakland and San Francisco.

Stivie and I went everywhere we could around the city by bike, train, foot and bus–a vegan radical punk tour—exploring different neighborhood cafes, murals in the Mission, going to shows and the Anarchist Café, eating bagels with avocado, finding vegan chocolate treats at Rainbow Grocery, eavesdropping on stupid German tourists in Chinatown, taking photos of the Bay Bridge, and so much more. It was awesome. Hopefully see you on the other side of the Atlantic soon.

Next month, Erika Ransom vs. the Golden Gate Bridge, and tales from Boston! I'll be going back for a visit to the East Coast in mid-April, see what the punks are up to (no good I'm sure), kick Al Quint's ass (oops, did I say that out loud?) and the New England Anarchist Bookfair April 21-22. Check out www.neanarchistbookfair.org.



Le Pastiche Noir
Translation by Quaid

Chapter I: Regret

Not often has a man such as I, a man of steel resolve and workplace integrity, taken a moment from his hectic lifestyle/deathstyle to apologize to you, the lowly reader, for things I have put to print. Last month's column may have been one of the worst pieces I have ever submitted to MRR. Those of you who scoff into your shirtsleeves and mutter such things as, "Isn't that every month? LOL!" can write down your various witticisms regarding my column and send them to me in the mail. I will lacquer them to my walls so that future tenants will know of my shame until this building turns to dust in the wind. Then we can only hope, when the wind blows across the Midwest, that the future Reptoid denizens of the Earth will taste these vicious barbs on their lizardly tongues and scoff likewise at my haphazard attempts at a "message."

Chapter II: Clarification

I was unnecessarily harsh towards certain bands and people who have made decisions, decisions I'm sure they think were the best they could muster, to put out arguably shitty records on arguably shitty labels. In doing so, I fear I became another Mark McCoy—making inflammatory statements because I really had nothing much else to say.

When you get down to the brass tacks of it, these bands that decide to "sign" with such-and-such label (most recently Fucked Up) lose all relevance when it comes to punk. Bands like Das Oath, Paint It Black, or Against Me all have made the decision to thus be inconsequential to anything remotely titled "DIY punk." Possible psychological origins of the impetus may or may not include:

a) To fill a void
b) Absentee father
c) Sexual triumph
d) Not enough glossy promo packets in life
e) Transcend the boundaries of traditional hardcore with melody, aggression and
f) expansive songwriting structures.
g) Middle-child syndrome

I don't think there is nothing "wrong" with what these bands have done. It's just fucking lame.

Chapter III: Definitions

Lame: ('lAm) Middle English, from Old English *lama;* akin to Old High German *lam* lame, Lithuanian *limti* to break down – lacking needful or desirable substance, replaced with booking agent and ego.

Reptoid (rep-"toid) Race of supernatural beings of reptilian decent dwelling and toiling deep below the earth, plotting the downfall of man. Often reported wearing hoods.

Mark McCoy: ('märk m&-'koi) from Dekalb, Ill.—owner/proprietor of Youth Attack Records. Once fought sassy war against Felix Havoc. Often reported wearing tight pants and sporting foppish hairdo in vaunted manners. Very, very, very clever.

Chapter IV: Revisions

I sit here hoping, no...*praying*, that this band Clockcleaner gets "signed" soon. Not enough bands/people nowadays have the *cahones* to sport the offensive shtick. This band truly riles all the pussies in the scene with their non-pussy rock 'n' noise attitudes. It is also exhilarating to see that someone is so comfortable with throwing the words "nigger" and "faggot" around like so much confetti. See what I mean? *Cahones*. Big ones. Big veiny, unchastened balls that threaten to rampage through your town and leave only a trail of sass and brutality behind, kind of like how a slug leaves a trail of slime...but...you know...this trail is like, bad words and shit. Shit! I get all tingly just thinking of it. I bet David Yow is rolling in his grave, even though he isn't dead...*yet*.

The *Philadelphia Weekly* says, "Clockcleaner's music is a dish best served loud." What fucking tripe. Who dares contrive such an uninspired statement so unworthy of a band of such daring distortion. Here are some more apt, Clockcleaner-esque descriptions for all the talent scouts reading this:

"Clockcleaner's music is a dish best served faggot."

"Clockcleaner's music is a dish best served nigger."

"Clockcleaner's music is a dish best served not by some pussy."

"Clockcleaner's music is a dish so delicious that it makes all other dishes seem pointless to serve and therefore Clockcleaner's music makes all music, past, present, and future, pointless to listen to."

Chapter V: Unrelated

Robert Stack ruined my fucking life. That smug motherfucker, stalking the empty prop alleyways of TVamerica during my childhood, sent a spike through my brain that has caused, as far as I can tell, *all* of my problems. From financial, to emotional, to mechanical, I can feel his prickly roots down to my very bones and still hear his monotone/baritone murmurings of ghosts, ghouls, murders, and monsters. Complete with that theme song—doo DOO doo DOO doo DOO *DEE,* doo DEE doo DEE doo DEE *DOO, BOOOOWW BOWWWWWWW*—he crept his way into my psyche and produced the dilapidated shadow of a man who types before you this very day.

I haven't always used cheap parlor vocabulary and vague insults to get people to read my tripe. Robert Stack and his Unsolved Mysteries made me into this spineless and insecure Truncate not even fit to be consumed by a starving CHUD.

Because of Robert Stack, I still sleep with my feet facing the doorway and away from all windows for fear of and easy escape from:

a) Aliens
b) Ghosts
c) Crazy husbands/wives trying to take my inheritance
d) Bigfoot
e) Loch Ness Monster
f) Spontaneous Combustion
g) Witches
h) Mark McCoy
i) Bank Robbers
j) Amelia Earhart
k) Clockcleaner's music as a dish served

Come to think of it, Amelia Earhart can go fuck off for similar reasons. I bet her and Robert Stack will put out a split record of Jade Tree.

Chapter VI: Unsolicited Endorsement/ Ballyhoo

Brain Handle, shrouded in mystery/flannel, will be on tour this coming spring and will be making it across the Midwest, out to California, and back through the South. They'll have two 7"s out by this point. If you see their name on a flyer, please crumple up the flyer, bring it to the show, and throw it in their faces, screaming defiantly "*How the fucking fuck do they expect*

us to live like this?" or your own choice of Defiance lyrics.

Chapter VII: Admittedly

I have signed to Victory Records. My column will now be sent out to readers every month in the form of a Magic Eye. Each month you will stare into the mesmerizing collage of patterns and colors and see a way in which I will possibly die and/or a pretty cool spaceship. $30 gets you a year's subscription and some porno I found in the woods.

In what was an incredibly unheard of exercise in restraint and patience on my part, I held off on investigating the latest offering from THE DEADLY SNAKES until the time was right. In 2005, In The Red Records released the band's fourth album, *Porcella*, on CD only. Upon release of this CD, it was divulged that a vinyl version would soon surface, complete with additional and exclusive material not found on the initial CD release. Having followed this band's every move since *Love Undone*, it was difficult to resist picking the CD up. I held it in my hands several times at the record store only to put it back and bite my lip. I even refused a promo copy, which is about the most uncharacteristic thing I've ever done. Recently, right around the time I was about to lose control of my bowls and/or spontaneously combust, In The Red released the deluxe version of *Porcella*, a double-LP gatefold endeavor re-titled *A Bird in the Hand Is Worthless*. Now…was my new-leaf waiting all for naught? Did I overestimate what The Deadly Snakes were capable of? Of course not. I'm right about everything…and I was right to wait.

A Bird in the Hand Is Worthless outshines their previous high-water mark *(Ode to Joy)* in that it's a fuller, more competent exploration of what they had (apparently) only hinted at in prior releases. While their original framework remains that of a truly top-notch R&B outfit, they've pushed it further and further with each release, skating across various genres and periods to come up with their own unique take on things. It all culminates here, where they tackle the stompers and the more somber numbers with equal skill and passion. Furthermore, with so many twists and turns over the 20 songs included here, the album never seems like anything other than a complete work. I find myself spinning all four sides front to back instead of hopping around for choice cuts. Like I've said countless times before, albums that you can truly dive into are so rare and special that they deserve acclaim, and this is one of those albums. Perhaps I'm overstepping my bounds by thinking/hoping the average punk would get off on the majority of *A Bird in the Hand Is Worthless*, but I'm certain that anyone with a love for rock 'n' roll would find merit in its grooves. Reluctantly recommended for the more adventurous among this column's readers…but I think this is the sort of shit you should all be going apeshit over.

Although it's probably impossible for a 45 limited to 500 copies to ever be described as a hit single, the latest offering from Chicago's BUSY SIGNALS is just that. Having already christened them rulers of the 2005 singles roost, I'm not surprised to say that they've already managed to secure that same position for 2006 (thus far, anyway). "Can't Feel a Thing" b/w "All the Time," released on the always great Shit Sandwich label, one-ups their debut in the catchiness department, offering two short burners that you simply can't help but spin over and over again. All the folks who went apeshit for Shit Sandwich's recent MARKED MEN single might just fucking drop dead after hearing this one. After two singles, I can now officially say that the Busy Signals are one of my very favorite bands going today. I await their next move patiently…there's no sign of this single become tired any time soon.

Shit Sandwich has another great release this month with *All I Give*, the debut 7" EP from COCOCOMA, a new Chicago band featuring members of HEADACHE CITY. Although they too implore the use of Farfisa to accentuate the sound, CoCoComa is much more bombastic and upbeat than Headache City, which they show here on their great debut, and their equally impressive live show. Definitely a band worthy of further investigation. As is customary with Shit Sandwich, both CoCoComa and the Busy Signals' records have an extremely limited colored vinyl run, which I'm certain will be extinct by the time this hits the stands. To stay on top of the insanity, mosey over to www.shitsandwichrecords.com.

Although I'm sure that everyone and their mother already owns it on CD, THE SPITS have re-released their debut album on vinyl! Sorrow Records (a Spits-operated label?) has launched itself by tackling one of the major oversights in recent memory. How anyone could release a Spits album as a CD-only release is beyond me, but thankfully that's a thing of the past. Unfortunately, I'm sure folks will have to jump through some ridiculous hoops to score this on vinyl. At their Dot Dash show last year, copies of this were on sale for $30! Luckily, some wormed their way into distro hands with a price tag of $15, which still only works out to roughly $1 a minute. Whatever. Fun doesn't come cheap in 2006, so do what you gotta do to score one of these.

Longtime Crypt Records and In The Red devotees will surely want to pick up the *Live at the Chemical Lounge* LP, the lone live album from the late great NECESSARY EVILS, released in limited run of 300 copies by Slovenly Records. The Necessary Evils carried the torch for many years in the mid-'90s, with each of their records causing more than their fair share of commotion amongst the many devotees of desperate, blown-up blues-punk. This LP captures them at their most outrageous, clearly one drink or drug shy of losing it completely. Although their praises are being sung by fewer and fewer as of late, there's no denying their impact on much of what's being pumped out today (especially outta the Euro garage punk scene). *Live at the Chemical Lounge* is as good a place as any to get acquainted with the Necessary Evils…but you better be prepared for one severe jolt.

Slovenly's recent single series has gained much attention due to the recent BLACK LIPS and REIGNING SOUND entries, but I gotta say that an (until now) unknown English band has turned in the best single of the lot thus far. The *OK Alright* 7" EP is the debut release from THE HIPSHAKES, and man, what a shocker it is. This is pure UK-flavored *Killed By Death* punk, featuring three breakneck tunes that barely break a minute each. A true screamer and certain to be one the best singles of the year, I think. Gimme more!!!

Terminal Boredom's resident rude-tude scribe Matt Coppens finally has an outfit where he can dish out his hate via the magic of self-destructive punk rock. Emaciated Records has released a split 7" EP that offers us the first glimpse into two of the Midwest's most promising train-wreck bands, THROBBIN' URGES and Coppens' own (already defunct?) GLORIFIED TRASH. Both bands fit the crash-and-burn mold perfectly and I doubt they'll survive long enough to offer up

anything else (although a Throbbin' Urges full-length has been rumored for quite some time). If you need a good kick to the head, look no further.

Must be *Terminal Boredom* spotlight month or something, but another contributor, Troy Thrills, makes his vinyl debut this month as well. Troy's CHEAP THRILLS are paired Virginia's NERVOUS HABITS on a split 7" EP split-released by both bands. Cheap Thrills play some top-notch punk that would be right at home on Rip Off Records (complete with a great PVC cover!). Nervous Habits keep the pace going in a similar vein. A great split 7" with two equally matched bands that we should all keep an eye on. I suspect we'll be hearing more from both in due time.

I'm not sure if Cass Records or Die Slaughterhaus is the responsible party, but there is an ultra-limited split 7" featuring THE DIRTBOMBS and THE BLACK LIPS! Pressed in celebration of their recent tour together, the single features a screened white sleeve and exclusive track from each band (The Dirtbombs' side is a live cut). I was able to catch this tour and snatch up one of these puppies and, like the show itself, the Black Lips win this particular battle. Either way, this is an essential purchase for fans of either band…but very difficult to come by.

Putting that mystery aside momentarily, Cass *is* the responsible party for "Get Out of My Life" b/w "Every Inch of Horrors," the latest single from THE FATALS. Although I still feel that the 10" EP on Yakisakana I dished last month is this band's best offering, this latest single is a worthy companion piece. Fatals fans should also take note of their recent *Live at the WFMU* 7" EP recently released by the hopelessly obscure Profet label. Expect to search high and low and pay high import prices for this one.

New York's Baby Killer Records returns after their recent WEEKENDERS release with a great new 45 by everyone's favorite cock-sure, infectious pop kings, MOTO! "El Stop" b/w "She's Gone Nuts" features the same tongue-in-cheek pop courtesy of MOTO main man Paul Caporino that has won many over in the past couple years. Whether it's Paul and a drum machine or with a full band, his tunes imbed themselves in my brain on the first listen every time. I honestly can't think of a reason why I wouldn't be interested in hearing a MOTO record, and this one does the job as well as the others.

Fans of THE SORES should make certain that they investigate THE STANDARD TRIBESMEN, a side project featuring Martin Heroin and a couple of his favorite co-conspirators. Their debut (and perhaps only) *Picture Take* 7" EP is easily the strongest release I've ever heard out them, as fractured, tortured and downright dirty as it is. The focus has shifted from the Sores' trademark "Killed by Blues" to something more upbeat and punk, yet still strikingly off and creepy. I wasn't expecting much outta this, but I gotta say it's the best I've heard out of Martin yet. My guess is that this is ridiculously limited with next to no distribution, so your best bet is to contact these guys direct at www.thesores.com.

One of my favorite releases of last year was the debut LP by THE A-LINES, an all-girl punk band that featuring some members of THEE HEADCOATEES, STUCK-UPS and DELMONAS. Naturally, BILLY CHILDISH was affiliated with the group, but only on a production level, as the A-Lines played their own material (save for a few classic punk covers), not Childish's songs. Now I don't know if the A-Lines have been put on hold or anything, but a new Childish-related girl-group has come about (featuring a couple of A-Lines) called THE BUFFETS. That's right, it appears THE BUFF MEDWAYS now have their sister group, just as THEE HEADCOATS did. The Buffets make their debut alongside their male counterparts on a new split 7"EP released by Damaged Goods, *The Buff Medways Vs. The Buffets*. Everything is exactly as it appears, with The Buffets operating on the cuter side of things, being the female counterpart to Billy's Buffs. I actually prefer The Buff Medways to Thee Headcoats (perhaps an unpopular opinion), so it's only fitting that The Buffets have Thee Headcoatees trumped. Would I trade all of this for another A-Lines record? You bet your sweet ass I would! Even still, this split (and the Buffets' LP, *Saucy Jack*) is well worth a look, especially for the Childish enthusiast…who already owns multiple copies.

Backwards Masking has done it again. Why anyone would try to sneak a NO HOPE FOR THE KIDS 7" past a drooling public is beyond me, but this single has come and gone without much warning at all. I, being the true scumbag that I am, managed to order a copy while the getting was good, and let me tell you, NHFTK's win streak continues with their new 45, "Angels of Destruction" b/w "Cold Touch of Death." This 45 features two more classic No Hope tunes that stack up against their previous output. Hopefully another LP is on its way. Until then, keep your eyes peeled for this single…and its imminent repress or re-release.

The always-great S-S Records has three new singles this month. First up is a great reissue of the one and only single by CIGARETTES, "Gimme Cigarette" b/w "Oh! Oh! Oh!" A noteworthy single for a number of reasons, not the least of which is that it features a pre-FEAR Philo Cramer! Previously comped on a volume of the great *Power Pearls* series, "Gimme Cigarette" is one hell of a weird pop tune. There is simply no better way to describe it other than to imagine the '70s incarnation of SPARKS going punk. The aping of the Mael Brothers is acknowledged in the liners of the single, so it appears that Cigarettes succeeded in their tribute, although in a very original, off sort of way. The flip follows along the same lines, although it's less punked-up than the A-side and in full quirk mode. S-S couldn't have picked a better time to re-release this 1978 single and, as expected, I'm all over it.

Next up on S-S is the debut 7" from a new French band called CHEVEU. The S-S brain trust seems to have a mighty big fire burning for the current crop of French punks, and for good reason. Many of these bands, including Cheveu, have some of the most interesting takes on punk going today and never cease to push the envelope to come up with something worthy of your attention. On this debut, "Dog" b/w' "Make My Day," Cheveu sounds minimalist and busy at the same time. The A-side is punker and more danceable of the two, but it's the hypnotic pop of "Make My Day" that won me over. While certainly not a disc for the majority of *MRR* readers, I'm sure this would appeal to fans of VOLT and CRASH NORMAL. A couple of compilation appearances and an upcoming single on Royal Records (!) are rumored to be in the works, so (thankfully) there is more Cheveu to come.

Staying with S-S and France, we have my personal favorite of the batch, a new 7" EP from FRUSTRATION! If you were lucky enough to catch their *Artists Suck* 12" EP on Born Bad in 2005, you already know how fantastic this band is. This is brilliant, dark punk influenced by the likes of WARSAW/JOY DIVISION and their ilk, but comes across so driving and sharp that you won't find yourself soaked in gloom after the inevitable multiple spins their records produce. This and their new 12" EP, Born Bad's *Blind* (reviewed this issue), puts them near the top of my current favorite European bands list. This is a seriously great band that you *must* investigate!

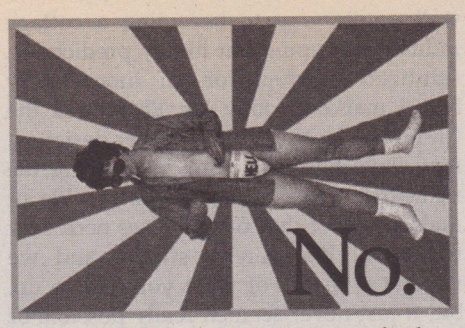
Plastic Idol Records stays in fine form this month with two new singles. The first,

a new 7" EP from Oregon's ANXIETIES, lingers more toward the pop crowd. *The De-Evolution Will Be Televised* 7" EP sounds like a typical product of the current Pacific Northwest crop of bands: a slight new wave lean (especially lyrically) coupled with some driving straightforward punk. They fall right in line with THE MINDS or FLIP-TOPS, which is no doubt pleasing to a ton of folks reading this. Although it didn't quite get me going, Plastic Idol's other release is a sure-fire hit in my book. *Apparent-Transparent* is the third 7" EP by ANGRY ANGLES! Everything this band has done thus far has impressed the hell out me, and it's really great to see JAY REATARD in a band where he doesn't need to stroke a synth or bust his fucking head open (although, honestly, I love that stuff too!). Angry Angles are just a great punk rock band, free of all gimmicks and thuggery, focusing solely on Jay and Alix's great songs. The initial pressing of this release (600 copies on various different colors of vinyl) sold out in a matter of days, but a repress should be available by the time this hits stands. Do I even need to tell you it's a mandatory purchase? Aren't we past that by now?

Speaking of Jay and Alix, their great Shattered label has just released *Monologue*, the second vinyl album (numerous CD-R releases exist) by the one-man synth-punk project known as DIGITAL LEATHER. I suspect that this will be far too subdued and synth-y for most folks out there, but I've always been a fan of the Digital Leather releases...this being no exception. The songs are well put together and satisfy my small thirst for synth-punk in general, but I think the biggest strength Digital Leather has is that Shawn is able to walk the line between angsty, almost playful lyrics and tones and downright desperate and vicious imagery. I think it's great that more folks will investigate Digital Leather now that it has officially received the Shattered seal of approval.

I suppose there's no better place to wrap up than with the highly anticipated and fucking fantastic new album from Atlanta's FRANTIC! Featuring folks from THE CARBONA, the Frantic astonished me with their debut 7" EP on Die Slaughterhaus a few years band. On new LP, *Attaque of the Grizzlie*, released by Douche Master Records, they channel early '80s punk and hardcore in such an authentic way, you think this was lost relic from the Posh Boy or Frontier vaults. A seriously killer LP!

That's all. You've had your fill! Mitch Cardwell, PO Box 23882, Oakland, CA 94623 USA; letsgethurt@yahoo.com.



Maximum Rocknroll is infamous for having a goodly clutch of columnists who frequently write about their own bands. I don't see a problem with this, as much of the magazine is dedicated to giving hoary old punks a place to sound off, many of whom were in great hoary old punk bands who enjoyed (ahem) somewhat limited distribution of their often-seminal works. Widespread, multi-generational dissemination of culture (including punk culture) in our society requires making it into a product, which takes money and infrastructure, yet many amazing pieces of art have been made by people with minimal budgets and no organizational/social skills. Assuring the longevity and availability of some damn good/radical music and ideas often necessitates a version of punk history written from the perspective of its immediate participants, and this first-person method of storytelling is as much a part of punk as the music itself—after all, the whole crux of "Do It Yourself" is that you don't need some top-down (economic) validation from long-established scenester tastemakers in order to loudly say what you have to say. *MRR* is one organ of this tastemaking apparatus, and while it is tenacious (some would say downright viral) in its attempts to represent a wide swath of often-obscure punk music and culture, it has been (and is) necessarily limited by the particular tastes and ethics of its all-volunteer staff.

I have been lucky in the past six years to have been in a band (Fleshies) that has enjoyed a goodly amount of support and validation from "punk tastemakers" ranging from *MRR* to Alternative Tentacles recordings to, on the more corporate side, Green Day's Adeline Records (who we are no longer affiliated with in the wake of the label's absorption into the Warner Music Group). The fact that Fleshies sell approximately six records a year doesn't seem to change this support, which has been relatively unconditional and much appreciated. We don't get paid a dime, but our records do come out (on vinyl as well as CD) and seem as though they will remain available for the foreseeable future. On top of all this, I get the bronze opportunity to be one of these hoary old punks sounding off every month in an *MRR* column.

A major reason for this state of affairs, however, actually stems from my involvement in an older scenester-ignored and/or reviled (for 90% of its existence) anomaly of a band with the ridiculous name of Bobby Joe Ebola and the Children MacNuggits (1994-2000), in which I sang high-pitched backup vocals and talked a lot of shit. Bobby Joe Ebola was so deliberately caustic, so confrontational and assaultive, that Fleshies (which has been described using those same adjectives) is quickly revealed, in comparison, as the punk rock traditionalist comfort music it started out to be. Bobby Joe Ebola was a reaction to growing up in oil refinery-ringed suburbs degraded into multiethnic ghettos, rife with desperation and ridiculous madness both calculated and unhinged, and the end result was often pretty damned scary while remaining hilarious. The laughter was unavoidable, uncomfortable, and often cut deep in both the audience and the band itself.

We would escape to Gilman Street every weekend, watch decent local bands such as Rancid degenerate into Clash tributes, and roll our eyes back into our heads before retreating to the kitchen of our cheap rented house in Pinole to watch Dan and Corbett write a song about it all. Bobby Joe Ebola and the Children MacNuggits was by far the most punk rock band I have ever, or will ever, play in. This is only compounded by the fact that we would sing songs that, for instance, might sound like Michael Jackson, Bing Crosby, and Celene Dion doing a collaboration with the lyrics, "You don't have to die alone / Take someone with you when you go / For there are billions of people / Who don't know what to do / So when you die a violent death / Take them with you." This was the era of the initial punk/pop/rock mainstream explosion, the genesis of boy bands such as AFI and the Murder City Devils, and the ballooning wee "punk scene" MTV people had no idea what to do with our bizarre rubbish. We were smart, caustic, deeply unfashionable, homely little shits from the trashy suburbs, and we refused to romance "the kids" into thinking we were anything but.

In fall 1996, a year and a half before MRR founder Tim Yohannan died, the not-for-profit Smarmy Post-Angst Musicians (SPAM) record label and Geekfest collective were contacting various zines to advertise our first compilation CD, *If You Can't Laugh At Yourself, We'll Do It For You*

(no, we didn't have the $ to put out vinyl). SPAM and Geekfest had started earlier that year around El Sobrante/Pinole bands such as Bobby Joe Ebola, the Bob Weirdos, Pork and the Spork, Yellow, and my own early Frank Zappa-ripoff high school band Annulus. We were not allowed to play Gilman (we didn't sound "punk" enough for the bookers at that time), so we set up our own free, all ages shows in illegal public spaces (that was what was available in Contra Costa County) with a bunch of regional bands who were, to varying degrees, outsiders to the now internationally fashionable East Bay area punk scene. This included weirdos such as Your Mother, the Hope Bombs, Dory Tourette and the Skirtheads (then called 976, until a hardcore band also called 976 beat them up), Los Rabbis, Uberkunst, Slackbone, Erik Core, the Human Beans, Faroke, Schlong, Cope, and a few others. Several of these bands were on the compilation, and we wanted to advertise both that CD and the Bobby Joe Ebola *Two Cats Running* CD that we had released a couple of months previous. *MRR*, as any aspiring salesperson of "punk product" knows, is pretty damned important to advertise in (and get reviewed in) if you want people to know what the hell it is you are doing. As the first head coordinator of SPAM/Geekfest, I spent about 20 minutes on the phone with Tim, who I had seen around at shows but never met, and was told (nicely) that what we were doing was simply not punk, as *MRR* defined it at the time, and thus not eligible for either review or (paid) advertising. It boiled down to sonics over spirit: regardless to whether what we were doing was "punk" in concept and execution or not, it simply did not sound enough like what was recognized as "punk music" to merit inclusion in *MRR*.

Of course, people who run such projects are more than entitled to set as strict editorial/booking controls as they like, and we were far from the only volunteer-run DIY entity to be snubbed by *MRR* and Gilman in this turbulent period (or any period, for that matter). Yet I was really bugged by this, and a big part of that was because I had spent a goodly part of my late adolescence religiously reading *MRR* and going to shows/volunteering at Gilman Street. The great '90s punk-into-pop crossover made it painfully obvious how many bands were studiously aping financially successful bands who were their predecessors, minus the vitriol and sense of confrontational purpose the original bands possessed before they started getting rich. "Punk," sonically and fashion-wise, was well on its way to becoming a cottage industry pumping out highly predictable, sanitized product for an increasingly broad market. Bobby Joe Ebola and the Children MacNuggits, whatever designs it may have had on somehow piercing the mainstream, was gloriously incapable of making *any* of the compromises necessary to do so. We weren't stupid, and we weren't unaware of what you had to do, but it just never seemed really possible or even worth it. Our pride in maladjustment ran too damned deep, and if anyone in our circle started to make tenuous steps towards being "cool" they were very quickly, and forcibly, reminded of just how dorky they actually were. Funny thing is, no one seemed to mind, because we were all having so much fun hosting free, illegal 100-band weeklong camping trips, putting out some *really* discomforting records, and blazing our own goddamned self-aware trail through the wilderness of trash culture in the roaring mid-late '90s.

Of course, within a few years we all hit our twenties, got sick of El Sobrante/Pinole, and moved to Oakland to be close to where the non-self-created action is. Geekfest/SPAM became established enough that it developed its own weird/lame "cool" cachet and collapsed in on itself right before reaching critical mass, buried under a flurry of broken minds, damaged souls, grinding poverty and bad business decisions—after all, it was never really set up right to succeed as "a business." By this point, the "punk scene" (including post-Tim Yo *MRR* and Gilman Street) had accepted Geekfest/SPAM as yet another branch in the gnarly (duuude!) tree of punk rock, and in the process it had lost a lot of its soul—and a lot of that may have been my fault, as my sentimental love for punk rock which developed early on became more of a yearning for its acceptance than I ever realized before. This impossible yearning later extended to Corbett (Bobby Joe Ebola singer), who took over as the last head coordinator at SPAM and became even more painfully "trapped in a world he never made" (to quote Howard the Duck, a comic about an hilarious, angry, and angst-ridden fowl Corbett and I both obsessed over in our childhood).

Bobby Joe Ebola and the Children MacNuggits, however, never blinked or faltered a single step before loudly self-destructing in 2000, though by this point the group had become popular enough to headline a packed Gilman Street. By this point, I had quit the band to concentrate on Fleshies, but not before singing backup vocals on the Bobby Joe Ebola swan song, "Carmelita Sings: Visions of a Rock Apocalypse." That album is so jagged and pointy, so critical of our surroundings, so raw and visceral and clearly enunciated (in three-part harmonies, no less), that it is actually somewhat painful to listen to. It's funny, for sure, but it's also a pure expression of discomfort music, or *irritainment* as Dan (Bobby Joe Ebola guitarist/singer) liked to call it—he certainly would never have called it punk. In Bobby Joe Ebola's gaze no one was safe from attack, from senior citizens to celebrity riot grrrls to college students; from parents to shitty bosses to cops; from innocent children to skin cancer victims to those who destroyed the ozone layer; from lonely couch-fuckers to psychedelic doomed turtles to BART commuters to humanity itself.

The point? Punk rock, to me, has a lot more to do with genuine nonconformity, radical art, confrontation, self-determination, and community than it does with what music sounds like or what clothes one is wearing. I am fully aware what a cliche that is (and a painfully obvious one at that), but the fact remains that it needs to be asserted with regularity in the long-standing public institutions of punk so that we don't become complacent and simply ferment in punk's stinky 30-year-old juices, losing our souls in the process. The story of Bobby Joe Ebola and the Children MacNuggits is a history that needs to be written, it needs to be stated—the band mattered, not just to me, but to a decent number of other people as well. I didn't write the words or music, but I was there and working alongside it most of the way. Looking at it now, six years since its demise, the best stuff from Bobby Joe Ebola stands out to me as some of the most "fuck you" music of all time, right alongside the Butthole Surfers' *PCPEP*, Nina Hagen's *NunSexMonkRock*, Devo's song "Beautiful World," Tom Lehrer's "That Was the Year That Was," Sly Stone's "There's a Riot Goin' On," Negativland's "Christianity Is Stupid," and Frank Zappa/Mothers of Invention's "We're Only In It for the Money." If you haven't heard any of these, please sell your Casualties picture disc and your Against Me! limited 7" single and go pick them up. You'll probably regret it, but no one ever said the truth didn't hurt.

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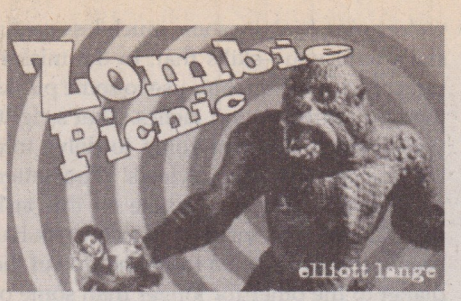


Konichiwa there, *MRR* readers. I think I'm still a bit jetlagged since returning from Japan over my spring break last week, but it was worth it to be there for the rather unmetal opening of the *sakura* cherry blossoms and to partake in the cornucopia of delights that is the typical Japanese convenience store. The string of good times did not apply to my experience of finding out one evening that grind legends 324 (who just released a new album *Rebelgrind* that hopefully we'll get to review here soon) were playing a show that very night and then missing their set by about 47 seconds. That sucked. But the curry doughnuts were exceptional.

On to the rock. First up is California's INTRONAUT, featuring former and current members of EXHUMED, IMPALED, and UPHILL BATTLE. The musicianship on their debut, *Null* (Goodfellow Records, www.goodfellowrecords.com), is undeniably impressive, particularly Danny of UPHILL BATTLE's amazing drumming, but I gotta say the seven-minute-average song length definitely loses me in parts—not via complexity but outta sheer boredom. The basic formula to the songs is: a couple measures of crazy drum patterns with heavy riffs accompanying, followed by some lackluster mellow meandering and then a couple minutes later the riffs crash back in to remind you there's a song playing. The busy parts remind me of a more precise BARONESS mixed with some MASTODON-ish technical quirks while the extended clean quiet passages tread slo-mo NEUROSIS/ISIS territory. They've definitely got some interesting ideas but for now they lack the riff writing power to make memorable tunes. I'll be looking forward to the next one though.

Speaking of EXHUMED, they also return after some time away from the heat lamps with a new split 3" CD (Obscene, www.obscene.cz) with the Czech Republic's INGROWING. Just three quick songs—a longer one, a shorter one and a cover of NAPALM DEATH's "Life?"—take care of their half, entitled *Something Sickened This Way Comes*. All the classic no-frills death metal killing capacity we've come to know and love from these old-school die-hards is well preserved. The three songs on INGROWING's, uh, "side" *To Clone and to Enforce*, are far more death metal influenced than their previously more straight-ahead grind style, not unlike, well, EXHUMED. While I think I prefer their previous, more streamlined blasting approach, these tracks are still quite convincing too. Good stuff from both.

Speaking of Eastern European metal, INGROWING's neighbors to the north, INCARNATED, are also flying the flag of true old-school death metal on their full-length, *Pleasure of Consumption* (Selfmadegod, www.selfmadegod.com). I'm not sure what the assorted raw meat and flesh on the cover is, but I think I can make out a tongue, a finger and maybe a liver. Wait, maybe that's not a finger. Anyway, unusual for a Polish band, INCARNATED have adopted a note for note recreation of the classic Swedish buzzsaw guitar sound. If you live and die ENTOMBED's *Left Hand Path*, as well you should, this'll be right up your alley. They do nothing new at all, but this is flawlessly executed ENTOMBED worship and pretty damn catchy at that. The drums bugged me at first, the whole kit being ridiculously over-triggered (triggered snare in particular sucks) and their treble register being a seemingly incongruous match to the bass churn of the guitars. But the guy behind them is so good I didn't mind for long.

Having raved about NEURAXIS' last full-length, *Trilateral Progression*, I made it a point to pick up their previous release *Truth | Imagery | Passage* (Willowtip, www.willowtip.com) when they came through town not too long ago along with STRONG INTENTION, IMPALED, and DISFEAR. The double CD, released last year, actually comprises three of the Montreal group's previous releases: *Truth Beyond...* from '03, *A Passage into Forlorn* from '01, and *Imagery* from '97. All three being full-lengths (plus some bonus live and video stuff), there's a lot of material to get through. *Imagery* is a bit rough, with a much different lineup and mainly just of historical value—not something you're going to repeat play a lot. But *Truth* and *Passage* are both so packed with amazing riff after amazing riff, you could listen to these for years and still be noticing new parts. The drumming's so good it's annoying, the guitars are heavy and inventive and the riffs are crushing and catchy—like *Progression*, they manage a rarely achieved balance of heaviness and melody. And they slayed live too.

Next up is *Dead Under Décor* from L.A.'s BLEEDING KANSAS on Abacus Records, the rather pathetically calculated imprint created by Century Media Records to cash in on metalcore's recent popularity explosion. BLEEDING KANSAS is kind of an interesting phenomenon. They are a virtual carbon copy of the bands in the late '90s that got money, fame, and haircuts defining the "metalcore" genre, like BOTCH and CONVERGE—particularly BOTCH. About five or six years ago, bands plying these exact same chords and vocal inflections were a dime a dozen and were quickly being snatched up by Trustkill, Ferret, and Equal Vision. But then THE DILLINGER ESCAPE PLAN hit the scene, sent the kids running for guitar lessons, and now with a billion and one DILLINGER clones out there, this style from the old millennium is virtually non-existent. Like a jonesing fashion whore, the metalcore scene moves with impressive speed, ditching the ancient five-year-old styles to keep up with the new sound, so when the Bloody Kansans come round pedaling their déjà vu riffs, it has the stench of a desperate Soviet beggar trying to hawk a Betamax tape on you. It's almost refreshing in a way.

In other "bands with states in their name" news—I just got the self-titled self-released 12" EP from a new Bay Area band that's been doing some damage lately: CALIFORNIA LOVE. With twelve songs in something like eight minutes, these dudes (featuring members of LOOK BACK AND LAUGH) don't mess around—just straight-ahead grinding power-violence with mean as all hell riffs, pounding speed, and gargled gnarled vocals. This shit would fit perfectly on one of the *Cry Now, Cry Later* comps—it immediately reminded me of the old Pessimiser bands like maybe DESPISE YOU and STAPLED SHUT mixed with CATHETER-style brutality on the faster, grindier moments. Bleak lyrics and a harsh unforgiving tone all around—this guys are definitely ones to watch out for.

Also from the Bay Area, I've said plenty previously in these pages about another dark local band, A SLEEPING IRONY. In particular, last time I mentioned their *Your Concrete Eyes* EP, which has just been released on 7" on the band's own Black Horizons label (www.black-horizons.com). In case you missed 'em before (and unless you live within 30 miles of here, chances are you did), these guys pound their way through a depressive mix of NEUROSIS style heaviness with minor-key UNION OF URANUS riffs and solid, off-kilter drum beats. The sound on this record is great—they manage a full, heavy sound with plenty of weird little noise passages incorporated between the three songs presented here.

Next up is the Albuquerque killing machine known as NOISEAR. In embarrassingly poor journalistic fashion, I don't have the record of theirs that just came out, and am instead going to write about the one that's been out almost a year now. The new one is called *Red Tape Agenda* on BlastAsFuk Records (www.geocities.com/blastasfuk), and from the few tracks on their MySpace page (www.myspace.com/noisear), the band sounds as intense as ever. For now though, I'll limit my comments to the *Submit to the Subliminal* 12" (Nuclear Ass, nuclearassrecords@hotmail.com), which I finally found in Scotty Karate's distro. Although released last year, this is actually an older recording from 1999, and although they're not quite as tight as they'd be on later material like the REGURGITATE split 7" or the aforementioned *Red Tape*, they're still plenty crushing, especially for an early recording. As I never tire of saying, Brian Fajardo's drumming is fucking unreal—definitely one of the best, fastest drummers in all of grind today. Maybe the band figured that out too, cuz the drum's are way out front in the mix, a bit too much even—the guitars are pretty sick too and it'd be good to hear more of them. Like the Czech Republic's GRIDE, NOISEAR seem to be all too often overlooked in the greater grind community, so cut it out and buy this record.

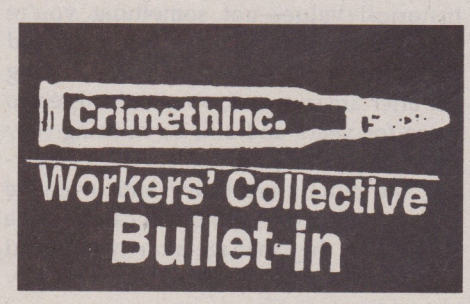
In the realm of stoner rock, the German trio COLOUR HAZE sent in their seven-song hour-long self-titled CD of stoner hesher jams on Elektrohasch Records (www.elektrohasch.de). With lots of Hendrix-inspired lead guitar work and predominantly instrumental songs of '60s/'70s style psych-rock with titles like "Love," "Flowers," and "Peace, Brothers & Sisters!" this is probably a bit too "lite" for most readers. But if you dig on stuff like KYUSS, this is basically *Sky Valley Part II*—the riffs are super heavy and catchy and the jamming pretty worthwhile too, especially on the epic 22-minute "Peace..." It's worth it alone for the hippie German Elmer Fudd accented exultation of "Brothers and sisters! We must fight for our fweedom!"

In the A/V Club department, a brief DVD-R entitled *Houston Grindcore!* (Clown to Franklin Productions) showed up here in the *Maximum* offices—a video compilation of five grind/metal/hardcore bands from Houston, Texas: INSECT WARFARE, FIGHT PRETTY, THE BEGINNING OF THE END, KRULLUR, and BOWEL. Unfortunately, with the notable exception of INSECT WARFARE, whom I've raved about repeatedly in these pages, there's not much of note. Or at least it's pretty hard to tell due to the editor's habit of limiting bands' songs to ten-second snippets and fading them in and out. Some of this is live stuff but most are "videos," such as the kinda funny INSECT WARFARE song set to various footage of rampaging army ants and cheesy '50s monster movies. The whole thing's not much more than 20 minutes anyway, so maybe you should just track down these bands' recorded fare instead.

A couple power violence demos to close things up. First, Santa Cruz's THE CHILDREN'S CRUSADE sent in their second demo, the first cassette tape I've gotten in fucking forever. I still haven't hooked up my tape deck since the last time I moved so I'm glad I still got my Walkman around. With eight songs in seven minutes (including lengthy samples) the CRUSADE play quick straight-up California power violence very much like the obvious influence SPAZZ. They do a great job of distinguishing each song with catchy riffs, tons of speed, intelligent lyrics and great vocal tradeoffs. This is better than half the records we get sent here, so someone please, put 'em on a 7". Tapes are $2 a piece ($6 for four) to: Fred Avila, 41 Grandview St. #1405, Santa Cruz, CA 95060.

Finally, there's the new band from some people who've been involved in the German grind/hardcore scene for a while now: COLD WAR. With current and ex-members of PINK FLAMINGOS, MIOZAN, and SKRUPEL, COLD WAR cranks out bursts of short fast angry-as-fuck old-school blasting hardcore like INFEST, HELLNATION, and a big bag of noise. They only have a rehearsal tape at the moment (and the tracks on their MySpace page: myspace.com/coldwarhc), but look for EPs soon to come on both 625 and Deep Six. Get in touch at: coldwar@gmx.de

That's it for now. Send all demos of KING CRIMSON cover bands to: Elliott Lange, 1320 Fulton St., SF, CA 94117, USA; cromlaughs@hotmail.com.



For the past few years, this column has largely been given over to sharing useful direct action skills. Today, dear reader, we're going to share some much less useful skills with you—skills that, to the misfortune of all, are of greater use to some punks than any direct action tactics. That's right, you guessed it, we're going to delve into the fine art of writing reviews! Who better, in all seriousness, could take on this task than CrimethInc. writers, whose work has been vitriolicly reviled from one side of the planet to the other for longer than some of its critics have been able to read? Anyway, we present, for your edification and entertainment:

The Fine Art of Criticism:
A How-To Guide for Aspiring Journalists

Those who can, write; those who can't, write reviews. Writing reviews is the surest shortcut to a sensation of power for those who lack the dedication necessary to create something of actual worth. In passing judgment on others' work, the reviewer experiences a fleeting high of self-importance cheaper than any other.

And fortunately for the next generation of hacks, after squandering the best years of our writing careers composing purple prose for the throwaway tabloids of yellow journalism, we've finally perfected this most elusive of literary forms. Deceptively simple and mundane, reviews are often assumed to be easy to pen; in fact, it's almost impossible to compose one worth reading. To save you the trouble of suffering through this learning process yourself (and your potential readers the risk of suffering along with you), we present here a surefire failsafe handy guide to the most rightly unappreciated literary form of the twentieth century. Mix yourself a stiff metaphor, cultivate an air of supercilious indifference—a prerequisite for any reviewer worth the salt he hopes to pour in others' wounds—and read on.

The Comparison

This is the most common convention in the reviewer's repertoire, and the most swiftly, thoughtlessly trotted out. It comes in three basic varieties:

- A is like B: *"Orwell's* 1984 *is basically a rewrite of Zamyatin's* We, *right down to the use of punctuation marks." "Like any other band with guitars, bass, and drums, Cannibal Corpse owes everything to Chuck Berry."*
- A is like B + C: *"The sequel to* The Matrix *is the bastard child of Nintendo video games and MTV's* The Daily Grind." *"Dragonforce sounds like Richard Marx with double bass."*
- A is like B (perhaps + C) under extenuating conditions: these can include, for example, drugs—*"Jackson Pollock is like, uh, Matisse on serious methamphetamines"*—violence—*"Baudrillard offers the sort of*

insights Foucault would have hit upon if he'd suffered severe head trauma at an early age"—evocative locations—*"Imagine Tolstoy's* War and Peace *if it was set in a Soviet gulag across only three days; there you have it, Solzhenitsyn's* The First Circle"—or, for maximum cliché action, all three: *"Muppet Burger's new album "Fuzzy Massacre" sounds like Sun Ra and Sinead O'Conner, cranked out of their minds on cough syrup and banana peel blunts, beating the stuffing out of Morrissey in a dark alley while humming La Marseilles to themselves."*

The Fawning Accolade

A critic should not tender a positive review unless he believes he stands to gain in some way. Sometimes demonstrating one's superiority by exhibiting prescient taste can be as gratifying as the more direct approach of simply declaring something inferior. Of course, the power dynamics shift as soon as the spotlighted upstart gains a certain amount of attention: then, glorification accrues to the artist rather than the reviewer, so one must return to scorn and ridicule.

Things are not usually even this complex: a guest list and bar tab beckon, a senior editor threatens, advertising dollars await, Public Opinion counsels that this is going to be a Hot Item this year and those who fail to get on board do so at their own peril. One must give positive reviews to something, after all, and it never hurts to kill two birds with one stone.

Sometimes it does occur that a neophyte, carried away by actual passion unbecoming of the serious journalist, expresses honest appreciation. Please, resist this temptation. We've all got mouths to feed in this business, and a certain professional standard of restraint and objectivity is only common sense.

The Interpretation

The critic does well to cast himself as the artist's interpreter, a modern-day successor of the priests who explicated the drugged ravings of the Oracle of Delphi. This relationship places the critic in the more essential role: any damn fool can get hooked on heroin and put a few chords together, but it takes a Greil Marcus to construct meaning out of the resulting cacophony and go on to trace its lineage to the Anabaptists. Artists are idiot savants who achieve greatness by unhinging themselves, as Rimbaud himself insisted—that's why the best of them die young; does it make sense to allow such people to speak for themselves? Besides, as a dancer, asked by a journalist to speak about her newest work, once rejoined, "If I could tell you about it, I wouldn't have to dance it."

For best results, select the most incoherent and opaque artwork, rewarding artists and movements that produce this with positive coverage. Ideally, the public, knowing themselves unqualified to do, feel, or think anything on their own, should bypass the artwork completely, coming directly to the critics. It goes without saying that any creative person who makes concrete statements—the musician who speaks between songs, the poet who dares write about a current war—should be decisively ignored, or at least dismissed as superficial. This policy worked fabulously for art critics throughout the twentieth century, and indeed may explain the evolutionary trajectory of Western art across that era.

The Personal Anecdote

When a reviewer feels the itch to hold forth about his own extensive experience as a widely traveled citizen of the world, he need not stick to the matter at hand. Many a frustrated travel writer, philosopher, religious mystic, and misanthrope has found a lasting career as a reviewer—not least because it is one of the few writing jobs in which it is not important that anyone actually read your work.

Hearsay and Speculation

Reviewers have to worry about their facts being checked about as much as federal agents at a bail hearing. Any old thing you heard or might have heard is fair game. It's your job to keep things interesting, so don't hesitate to spice up your review with a little scandalous gossip: *I used to be a card-carrying member of The Anarchist Movement, until I heard Bakunin was actually a paid agent of the Czar.*

The Stream of Invective

This can range from a simple insult (regarding Jack Kerouac's claim that he wrote *On the Road* in a matter of days, Truman Capote quipped, *"That's not writing, that's typing"*) to a veritable torrent of abuse—which, in some cases, may be well deserved:

Imagine Def Leppard if Wesley Willis was the principle songwriter and their vocalist sounded like a character from The Flintstones. Now imagine whatever you just imagined, only worse. There you have it, the debut from Andrew WK, "I Get Wet." This makes the stuff they play over the public address systems at professional football games seem bookish and highbrow. The lyrics are pathologically tautological ("you can't stop what you can't end"), the riffs sound like cheap radio advertising jingles with some of the notes played wrong, the end of every song sounds like a television being switched off. For that matter, the beginning of every song sounds like a television being switched on! My friend Gabe says this makes him feel like he's at a keg party at a frat house, but there are no women there, just drunk, belligerent jocks and brain-damaged football players wrestling the furniture and shouting each other down about the stock market. Myself, I can't help but imagine this blaring over the speakers in the personnel bay of an army helicopter as G.I.s are airlifted into an Iraqi village to slaughter mothers and children—and as if in anticipation of this, Andrew has recorded a track in which he sings over and over "You better get ready to kill, get ready to die." Even if you didn't have serious doubts about the future of Western civilization before you heard this release, one listen will make you a revolutionary in the tradition of the Dadaists and Situationists who set out to put an end to art itself—that is, if it doesn't reduce you to utter nihilism.

Absurd Allegations

When it's not possible to unleash a well-founded Stream of Invective, but the reviewer still desires to maintain the readers' attention, he must fall back upon what philosophers call the straw man argument: he must concoct the most ridiculous make-believe version of the subject of the review he possibly can, and display his great strength and prowess by painstakingly tearing it apart.

In ideological circles—including certain anarchist camps, strange to tell, where so much talk of solidarity would lead one to expect constructive criticism to be the order of the day—this approach is even more common than the Comparison. Those who believe—often correctly—that their ideas can only be of interest if all other ideas are entirely bankrupt must remain ever vigilant, ready to pounce upon and discredit other thinkers by any means necessary.

The Irrelevant Digression

The digression comes in two forms. In the more common form, it is a sort of verbal smoking break in which the writer gets up from his desk, takes a breath, and stretches his legs, all without ceasing to address the reader. Reviewers who wish to curry favor with discriminating readers should throw in as many of these as possible: the less attention they pay to the subject of the review, the more bearable their writing is bound to be.

Alternately, the digression can be an underhanded way to slip in Absurd Allegations, when there is no more straightforward pretext for introducing them. For example, in the midst of a review of the thoroughly utilitarian *Recipes for Disaster: An Anarchist Cookbook,*

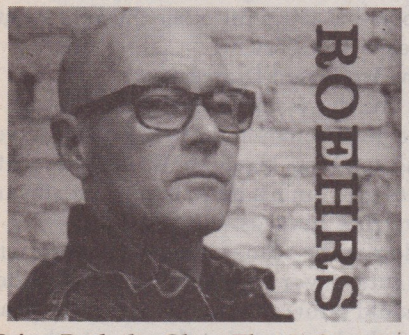
which is simply a collection of direct action tactics, the reviewer can, as if remaining on topic, stray into such ramblings as:

"their interpretation of social change seems to be that 'good people' can, and should, be agents of social change. The material conditions of that change, the horrible consequences of 'bad people,' and the history of social change that doesn't conform to the 'good people' model are all outside the scope of CrimethInc.'s approach. It is as if they have made a good and right choice and aren't going to let reality interfere with it."

Sample Exercise

Dash off a review of this issue of *Maximum Rocknroll* and submit it to the CrimethInc. front group magazine *Rolling Thunder* for publication (rollingthunder@crimethinc.com). Whether you compose a Stream of Invective, an Absurd Allegation, or an Irrelevant Digression, and regardless of whether you have ever undertaken to write a single word before in the English language (or have even read any part of this magazine other than this sentence), your review is bound to be more balanced and informative than anything that would appear in that publication otherwise. All the best in your future careers, fellow reviewers!

To reach those responsible for this column and demand more useful and meaningful fare, write the CrimethInc. Anti-Review Revue, PO Box 2133, Greensboro, NC 27402. You can also visit www.crimethinc.com and order, absolutely free of charge, copies of the anarchist primer *Fighting For Our Lives* to leave out in dentist's waiting rooms and give away on the bus.



Bring Back the Glory That It Once Was

Fuck! Ryan and the diligent workers at Gloom Records have issued another potent slab of brutal punk rock! The band is called THE JURY and the rough-hewn EP is called *I Hate the Future*. This music is fraught with anger and damaged nerves. The singer screams as a man possessed and the bile covers the front rows of the crowd! This will be uncomfortable music for you apathetic drones. The music grabs you by the fucking ears and holds you down until you submit! You will be bludgeoned by great music and intelligent lyrics. Read some of these words of wisdom from the song, "Sour Grapes": "What was I thinking not shooting up my school or getting some anthrax when I had the chance? / Now I've got nothing to look forward to / Just life as a young professional / This is the future / This is the taste / Breathe it in / It's sour grapes." Fucking brilliant!

"Dog Years," "I See London, I See France," "Wizards" and "I Hate the Future" all have good lyrics harnessed to over-the-top hardcore punk music. This is an extremely strong EP! You need this right now! Order THE JURY *I Hate the Future* EP from Gloom Records, PO Box 14253, Albany, NY 12212; www.gloom-records.com.

Fuck yes! Taang Records is poised to record a new RAT CITY RIOT album after the band finishes its current tour. With that good news, we will review the first RAT CITY RIOT album, *Dirty Rotten Games*, which gets better with every listen! The 2005 record starts with the melodic title cut, "Dirty Rotten Games," about people judging others unfairly. Noah sings "Done your worst / Knock me down every day / I'll keep comin' back / There's no choice to make / Gotta get by / Get even someday / I'll be the one that ruins your day." That's good shit!

"Break Us Down," song number two is one of the best rock and roll songs of the decade! This fucking kicks your ass from the very first note! Read these lyrics: "We're breaking out, we're running the streets / We're the youth, we won't take a seat / Standing tall, standing side by side / Never break us down, never steal our pride / You're nothing but a mouthful of words / You've read the book but the story's not yours / Say you hate what I'm all about / Nothing changed by running your mouth / Got to find to find a way / Working hard working every day / Got to find to find a way / Make a difference each and every day / Got to find to find a way / Working hard working every day / Got to find to find a way / Working hard in the USA / Youth in trouble without a doubt / But the spirit remains of what it's about / this is my home I'll keep the faith / Never be like you, you're just a fake / This is the land, the proud and free / Lady Liberty lights the way for me / Star spangled banner reflects in my eyes / I'll make sure this dream never dies."

Song three rollicks through a great Rose Tattoo-type beat. This one will ring true with anyone who had a relationship go sour. "Better Off" says "So hard for me to trust, when all people do is take…" and "I see that the end never justifies the means." Yes! There's lots of bitterness to be had here. Song four is "First Look." RAT CITY RIOT offers: "Right off the bat, their minds are made / No matter wrong or right." It is clear no warm greeting will ever be exchanged between these two humans. "Keep Running," song number five, kindles a positive attitude – even through the singer has been cheated and broken-hearted, he reminds you "You've only got one life to live." "Too Much to Prove" has some well thought-out advice for the guys running their mouth…"Too much to prove / Not enough sense to get by / Got smashed up again / But you still wonder why." Listen up you young impetuous tough guys!

Song number seven is a love song gone wrong – "Time to Shine" relates: "I wore my heart on my shirt sleeve / You gave it back when you were through / It's all bruised and black / Consequence of loving you!" Hell Yes! Song number eight is a fucking rocker! "Reality TV" gets you by the throat from the onset! "Reality TV" wants you to remember those men and women dying, "Thousands of miles from the ones you love / Who's calling the shots? / The men in white gloves" and "Your only concern / Not to wind up dead." Next up on the menu is "Foot on the Floor," which is a highway song and it has a menacing refrain, "Out of control / End of the road." This one hammers you into the fucking asphalt!

Song number ten is the superb self-titled anthem these guys perform with such enthusiasm! Not only does this rock like a motherfucker, but the words are inspirational. Read "Rat City Riot": "What do you do when there's no one there to help / Now you know no one ever cared / Society brainwashed too much / Violence silence win at all costs / When do the ordinary lose their minds? / When they see us destroying their lives / Time to stop, take back what's ours, it's time / Kids now destroy, disrupt / Rat City Riot – Unite and win at any cost / Rat City Riot – Shout it out it belongs to us / Rat City Riot – This town is ours c'mon let's fight / Rat City Riot – Won't ruin our night / Too much pressure in the streets tonight / Everyone scared to stand their ground and fight / Hit them, smash them, until they give up / Too late for them, we'll never let up." Fucking "A" – that shit is fucking amazing! The grand finale on the *Dirty Rotten Games* CD is a powerful cover of SLAPSHOT's

"Secrets" – yes!

Go see RAT CITY RIOT when they hit your city. This is great rock and roll with a capital "R"! Buy your RAT CITY RIOT product from Taang Records, 706 Pismo Ct, San Diego, CA 92109; www.taang.com.

TKO Records has a really good PUNK CD prepared for you cretins! The name of the band is NAZI DOGS and the CD is entitled *Chase the Man*. These German punks scorch your living room walls with 1979-style STITCHES punk rock. The singing on the record is super snotty. The NAZI DOGS start you rocking with "Border Line" and segue right into "Suicide King." This fucker has a good STOOGES riff as an underpinning. Next up is "Hookers," about how we all prostitute ourselves one way or another. "Chase the Man" laments the frustration of having a violent drug dealer in your neighborhood. Song number five is "Detention Zone," with a very unpleasant message for you hapless punks. Read on: "Welcome to Detention Zone / Straight ahead – you're not alone / Where this state's real face is shown / Right on front when you're ready to rise / Barricades and teargas in your eyes / Welcome to Detention Zone / Welcome to a world of hate / Don't protest – Annihilate! / They try to rule your fuckin' fate / Beat them down, it's not too late / They got guns, wanna shoot you down / They kick your face when you hit the ground / Welcome to a world of hate / Cops are running, bricks are thrown / Down in Detention Zone / Screams of terror / Victims moan / Down in Detention Zone."

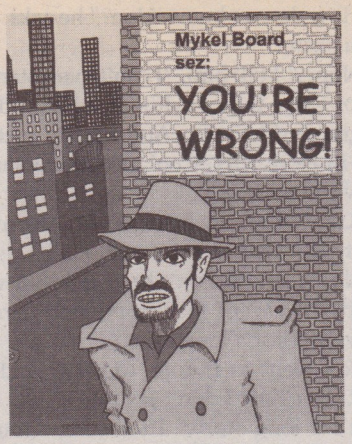
Song six is "Neutrons," about the power drunk world leaders who thwart any attempt to achieve peace. "Wasted" is a twisted love song about his lover's attributes performing blowjobs. "No Way" has some pithy opinions: "The past is pretty dead / A future I don't see / My world is just a mess / And I ain't got no key."

"Gonna Go" is more commentary on the rock n' roll lifestyle that the NAZI DOGS have perfected. This study in decadence includes "Smoke some coke / Throw some pills / Date some chicks / Hire some sluts." Yeah! Those NAZI DOGS sure know how to live! The last song is a respectable cover of DEVO's great "Mongoloid" – very good! This is a rocking CD!! Order your copy of *Chase the Man* by the NAZI DOGS from TKO Records, 8941 Atlanta Avenue, #505, Huntington Beach, CA 92646; www.tkorecords.com.

Until next month…

See you around…

See you at the fucking bar!



You always have to watch out when people start talking about purity, *ethnic or otherwise. It usually means someone is going to get hurt.*
—Elena Glassberg

The *MRR* editrix suggested we write about DIY, the invasion of big corporations into punk, the difficulty of remaining true to the vision, and of keeping punk pure. Interesting topic, though not unusual in these pages of punknic cleansing.

There are a few issues here.

1. Does punk *mean* DIY, small label, independent?

2. Is DIY, small label, independent inherently *better* than big corporation? If so, better for whom? For the individual/band/writer/zine? For the world? For rebellious teenagers living off their parents' allowance?

3. Is punk a style or a way of life?

The answers depend on your point of view. If A, then B. If you don't believe A. Then B is not true.

So let's look at the questions above. The first is easy. GG Allin was the punkest human being in history. Or at least in the 20th century. Would he be any less punk if *Eat My Fuck* were released on Warner Brothers? Of course not. If GG Allin continued doing what he was doing. Shitting where he was shitting. Getting arrested the way he got arrested. Living a life of just not caring, of having no fear, of being able to piss on the president of his record label, GG would be just as punk. No matter who put out his records.

If GG were inhibited in some way, if he didn't do something because he feared being dropped by the label, or lack of promotion, then he'd be less punk. It's not the label that makes the punk. It's the balls.

Question two is more difficult. I usually prefer independents over corporate giants. I never go to Starbucks or McDonalds. I don't buy Nike. A Sony-induced worm does not infect my hard drive. But I make compromises.

Sometimes I feel *forced* into the corporate world. I use a Windows computer because I grew up with it. All my bootlegged software is in Windows—or MS-DOS. Is Apple better? The system sure is. But is the company? I don't know. I only know it's smaller.

Sometimes, on a personal level, big corporate stuff is just better. I rent from Hertz because when I call they don't put me on hold. I can change my reservations at the last minute. The guys at the rental garage know me, and will hold my favorite car even if I'm late picking it up. They give me a free rental for every six paid ones. I can get a satellite system that *somewhat* makes up for my lack of directional sense. And they never complain when I bring the car back with a flat tire, or the back seat carpet missing.

Sometimes, a product is good, but the corporation is total shit. Pfizer and Coca-Cola are horrible companies. Pfizer's pricing and tight patent control kills people. Coca-Cola has overthrown leaders to get its product into countries and cheap raw material out. But Pfizer makes Viagra, for G-d's sake. And Coca-Cola makes, well, Coca-Cola.

So waddaya do? You can't be pure. Even vegans wear polyester (made from animals: dinosaurs) and cotton (containing the helpless bodies of millions of ground-up boll weevils). We've all got to draw lines—or die.

The question is not how to remain pure, but how to draw our lines.

Question three has as many answers as there are people who call themselves punks.

[Aside: Like in the mid-'80s, when everyone was suddenly *new wave*, these days, there's a taboo in calling yourself punk. A good taboo if you ask me. Punk is *balls*. You've got to have balls to break taboos.]

For me, punk is an attitude. It can be music, literature, a drunk on the street sleeping in his own vomit, a whore on the corner whispering *Hey Mister, you wanna go out?*

It is not style. A $300 designer "torn look" dress is not punk. A $3 thrift shop plaid business suit is. But other than the obvious, there's no *purity*. No arbiter. No this is, or isn't punk. There's no manual that lists the criteria for *true punk* or not.

It's as dangerous as hell to keep punk—or anything else, except maybe air and water—pure. Who's gonna be your punk cops, policing against contamination from lesser cultures? It used to be *MRR*—but Tim's dead now.

What the Supreme Court said about pornography, I say about punk. *I may not be*

able to define it. But I sure as fuck know it when I see it. That's enough.

Part Two
(continued from last month)

In the US, 40% of those surveyed say they were shy. In Japan it was 57%. The lowest percentage was in Israel with 31%. We speculate the reason was that in Japan, an individual's performance success is credited externally to parents, grandparents, teachers, coaches, and others, while failure is entirely blamed on the person.

In Israel, the situation is entirely reversed. Failure is externally attributed to parents, teachers, coaches, friends, anti-Semitism, while all performance success is credited to the individual enterprise. Israelis are free to take risks, since there is nothing to lose by trying and everything to gain. —Thomas H. Benton

Summary of last month's adventure:

I'm in Fort Lauderdale on a two-pronged mission: (1)promote my books (2)go to my pal Ms. S's wedding. The first two nights I stay with Tom Clearman, a Catholic Mensa Wobblie. He tells tales of things I've never heard of. He also introduces me to strange people who, though brilliant, have few of what the rest of society would call *social skills.*

For the wedding, I wear a tie for the first time in ten years. With my overcoat, tie and fedora, I think I look like a Mafia hit man. Entering the wedding site, Uncle Charlie asks if I'm the rabbi. Instant ego deflation.

Before the ceremony, Ms. S introduces me to Fletch and Greasy. Neither of them is wearing a tie. Both, in fact, are wearing hooded sweatshirts. Ms. S tells me they're skaters, friends of her famous skater husband to be. They speak in a language I don't understand. Transcribed, this is what Fletch says:

Hey, remember that time we were on the half-pipe in back of PK's? You were killing it, doing gnarly hand plants, landing all the way on the bottom of the tranny. So this guy wants to show he's a hotshot. He comes to the top of the pipe and wants to do an Ali-to-grind revert. He goes flying completely off the end. Just slams onto the flat-bottom. Pow! Right on his head. Coulda killed himself. We pissed ourselves laughing so hard. He didn't die though. Still, it was funny.

Though I don't understand it, I figure the word *Ali* has something to do with Islam—or maybe boxing.

Greasy sticks out his hand. "Yo, Mykel Board," he says, "I didn't expect to see any other famous people here. It's great meeting you. I used to read your column when I was a kid. You still writing for *Maximum?* Does it still exist?

"Yes. Yes." I answer.

"How do you know Alan?" he asks. "Are you a skater?"

"Nope," I tell him. "I can't even stand on one of those things without falling off. I'm not gonna ride one… And Alan? I met him once in New York. Cool guy. But actually I know the bride."

"Know! Know!" he says winking at me. "I get ya'—*know!*"

"No," I say. "I don't *know* her. But we're friends. We went to Europe together. I've known her for a long time."

"You went to Europe together and you don't *know* her? I don't get it."

"It's a long story," I tell him. "You can read it in a column."

"I can read *everything* in a column," he says.

"Mykel," comes the voice of Ms. S, "you've got to come upstairs and sign the *ketubah.*"

For the goyim amongst you, a *ketubah* is a Jewish wedding contract. It's a document that needs two witnesses who are in neither the bride's nor the groom's family. It's a fancy piece of paper with lots of Hebrew on it.

I forgot to bring a yarmulke—I'm not supposed to sign the thing bareheaded. They let me wear my detective hat.

After the signing, there's a hubbub. The actual wedding is about to begin.

The ceremony takes place outside, in a space that used to be a gazebo before the last hurricane blew it away. The real rabbi speaks with a strong Eastern European accent. A Jewer guy, I never saw. He goes through the mystical mumbo jumbo. Then, before he does his husband and wife pronouncing, he talks about each of the couple-to-be.

Ms. S's story I know—better than he does. Her hubby-to-be, I don't know that well, but the rabbi's heard all about him. He's famous. A skateboarder. He invented a word that'll be in the dictionary. Some kind of skateboard jump where the board stays attached to your feet. It's called the Ali—a weird name for a jump invented by a Jew. At least I know what it is now.

"…husband and wife. You can break the glass," says the rabbi as I zone back into the ceremony.

Someone once said that you can sum up all Jewish celebrations with:

They hurt us.
We killed them.
Let's eat.

Weddings skip the first two parts: fish, chicken, huge mounds of cheese, tons of booze. Yowsah!! I'm sitting at the table with the skaters. I still can't understand more than three-quarters of what they're saying.

"So how come he called it Ali?" I ask. "Is it like Mohammad Ali?"

"No," says Fletch. "It's O-L-L-I-E, not A-L-I. It was Alan's nickname, from where he liked to eat. That's why it's called the Ollie. Dude, you can't be that dumb."

"Of course not," I lie with a perfectly straight face. "It's just this way I have of putting you on. It's a Jew thing."

After eating enough to shit for a month, and drinking enough to puke as long, it's time to go home. The problem is, I don't know where *home* is.

I call Tom Clearman.

"Sorry Mykel," he says. "My gal from Boston is here, and well, you know how it is. Sorry. But you left your toilet kit in my bathroom. I'll mail it to you."

"Shit!" I say loudly after hanging up. "I'm screwed now. A Miami motel will cost a fortune. Besides, I'm gonna be sick."

A voice comes from behind me. "You can stay with us."

It's Alan, the groom. He's offering me a place to stay.

"Yo," I say. "It's your goddamn wedding night. I'm gonna stay with you on your goddamn wedding night?"

"What the fuck?" he says. "You're *mishpocha* (family). You're one of us."

I stay on their couch.

Flash ahead several weeks: I'm in Portland Oregon, reading at a cool bookstore called *Reading Frenzy.* It's Northwest Book Promotion time. I'll be in Portland, Seattle, Bellingham, and Vancouver, BC.

[Aside: I can't figure out why Vancouver is considered the Northwest. Look at a map of Canada! You can't get more *South*west than that. It's the Arizona of the North—but even the Canuks call it the Northwest.]

I'm surprised by the number of blonds up here. In New York, a blond is as rare as a protestant. But here, you see 'em all the time. Maybe half the people. Fat ones, thin ones, cute ones, ugly ones. They just walk around on the street, like they're ordinary folks.

After my reading, this guy comes up to me and introduces himself. He's got short dark curly hair, thinning in front.

"Hi," he says, "my name's Seth. We met about fifteen years ago. I used to write for this fanzine called *Factsheet 5.*"

I don't really remember the guy, though I do remember the zine. One of the all-time greats.

"I'm not sure I remember you," I say.

"Oh sure you do," he says, "I'm the Jew."

Flash ahead two days: In Vancouver, after the reading, a slightly shlubby guy with curly black hair comes up to me.

"Hey Mykel," he says, rolling up his

sleeve. "Check this out."

He's got a blue Star of David tattooed on his upper arm.

"Cool," I say, "you're one of us."

"Yeah," he says, "I thought you'd be offended. I mean Jews aren't supposed to have tattoos."

"Well," I tell him, "the rabbis recently ruled that it's okay to have a design tattoo. Something like a Star of David, or one of those Celtic bands. The rule is you can't have a *graven image*, like a person or an animal."

His face drops like a Matzo-packed turd.

"What about pets?" he asks. "I mean like cats. I mean like cartoons of cats. You can't have one of those?"

I can see by his one unrolled sleeve that he's got something to hide.

"No pets," I tell him. "No animals. No people. Or you can't be buried in a Jewish cemetery."

"And…there's…nothing…???" he stutters.

"Oh, sure," I tell him, "you can have the offending tattooed limb cut off and buried separately. It's no big deal. It's not like you'll need it in the afterlife."

I can see his features soften as he begins to believe I'm putting him on.

"Funny, Mykel," he says. And there starts a conversation about Skrewdriver, Muslims and how Noam Chomsky is a self-hating Jew. And about all the people who are anti-Israel.

"I'm anti-Israel," I say.

"I thought you were Jewish," he says.

"I'm a Jew," I tell him. "No –ish about it. But that's a cultural Jew. I'm not a religious Jew. I'm not a Zionist Jew. I'm just a plane ole' ordinary Jew Jew."

"Oh," he answers.

And that brings me to the second theme of this bi-themed column.

What is it about Jewtude that makes me say *I'm a Jew*, rather than *I'm a Punk* or most anything else when asked about my identity?

It's certainly not the religion. You know Jews have a prayer where men beat themselves on the chest and say *thank G-d I wasn't born a woman*? You know that according to Jewish law, if you see someone working on Saturday, you should stone him to death? You know that, as a Jew, if G-d tells you to kill your kid (Abraham) or murder a complete village of innocents (Canaan), you've got to do it? It's an awful religion.

It's certainly not Israel, which is—next to the US and maybe Russia—the most murderous country in the post-WWII world. It's killed thousands and tortured thousands of others in a paranoid attempt to protect its theocracy. Even the State Department of the US—the most pro-Israel country in the world—says that religious and racial discrimination is rampant in Israel. Israelis are Jews, so they have some of the great Jew qualities, like not being shy. But Israel is not a nice country.

So what is it that makes me proud of being a Jew?

It's the Jews, that's what. Not all of 'em of course, but the culture, and personality traits that make up Jews are what I love about it. The pushiness. The self-confidence. The boldness. The balls. It's the Chomskys, the Lenny Bruces, the Norman Mailers, the Karl Marxes, the Joey Ramones.

It's Deborah Libstadt, a Jewish professor at Emory University, who commented on the recent jailing of a Holocaust denier in Austria. She said, "We Jews, who have suffered from censorship should not be supporting it. Censorship renders the censored item into forbidden fruit, making it more appealing, not less so… The best way to counter Holocaust deniers is to teach the truth to as many people as possible."

It's my Arab friend Bassam, who I call right after the World Trade Center attacks.

"Bassam!" I ask. "Are you okay? I thought that Arabs might be targets after this thing and I just wanted to check up on you."

"Mykel," he answers, "thanks for calling. Everything is all right here. But you should know, it's only my Jewish friends who called me. They're the only ones who care."

It's how Jews walk into a restaurant and look at food on a stranger's table and just ask how—and what—it is. It's the way we are not shy. It's how we talk with our hands and how we refuse to be like everybody else. It's how we hug and kiss when we see our friends. Not a *toot toot oui Monsieur* two cheek kiss like the French. Not a Negro style chest-only hug and slap on the back. Nope. An honest-to-G-d wow!-I-can-touch-another-human-being-and-hold-'em-close-for-a-few-seconds hug. It's the way I can talk about books and art and punk rock, and the Jew I'm talking to knows at least something about books and art and punk rock. It's the way Jews bring new words into the language—like mishpocha, bagel, or Ollie. That's why I love being a Jew. Religion or nationalism has nothing to do with it. That's Jewish. For me, there's no –ish about it.

ENDNOTES:

The editorial staff of *The New York Press* walked out en masse after the publishers refused to print the Danish cartoons that sparked international riots. Have the cartoons been printed at all in the US? I guess they're on the web, but are they in print? I haven't seen 'em. [Last minute note: I hear a few papers printed them—none here in New York, that's for sure.]

A weird thing about this is the universal non-Muslim reviling of the riots. Strange how Americans will allow internal spying, Wal-Mart music censorship, TV V-chips, but when someone *else* complains—oh no! The other guys are anti-free speech.

Plus the news has been so distorted. Headlines like, *9 KILLED IN ANTI-CARTOON RIOTING* make it sound like the rioters killed people. It was the police and NATO troops who killed the rioters. Not the other way around.

And, where were they rioting? In front of a US-sponsored torture chamber, that's where. The cartoon was only the tip of the Goldberg.

Ah no, but Americans can be self-righteous and revel in our freedom of speech, while the CIA reads our email.

Ah the government dept: Under the headline "FDA Threatens To Raid Cherry Orchards," *Life Extension Magazine* (March 2006) reports that the Food and Drug Administration sent warning letters to 29 companies that market cherry products. In these letters, the FDA ordered the companies to stop publicizing scientific data about the benefits of cherries. According to the FDA, *When cherry companies disseminate this information, the cherries become unapproved drugs subject to seizure.*

Oh yeah, the FDA doesn't say the information is false. It only says that making the claim makes the item a drug and subject to penalties.

Are they gonna raid the breweries? dept: *The Bottom Line Daily Health Report* says that an increasing body of serious research backs up beer's health benefits. One of them is bone protection. According to a medical team at Tufts University in Boston, beer may help prevent bone-thinning osteoporosis.

Other findings show that beer lowers the risk of heart disease and increases the survival rate after a heart attack. Plus, it improves levels of "good" cholesterol and preserves mental agility into old age.

Other studies at Harvard show healthier kidneys and stronger antioxidants in beer drinkers than in non-drinkers. Let's drink to that!

Twelve dollars and thirty-five cents for your thoughts dept: *The Economist* magazine says that Oslo, Norway, has just passed Tokyo as the world's most expensive city.

Third is Reykjavik. New York where no-bedroom studios go for $3000 a month, is the highest placed American city. But it ranks only 27th in the world. If you live in the 26 higher ranked cities, you owe me a beer.

Don't pray for me Argentina dept: I'm not an atheist, but I hate the religionists more than I hate the atheists. That's why it was such a joy that *The New York Times* reported on a $2.4 million study on the power of prayer to heal sick people.

The results: *Prayers offered by strangers had no effect on the recovery of people who were undergoing heart surgery. And patients who knew they were being prayed for had a higher rate of post-operative complications.*

Yeah! It's not the time to be a Christian Scientist—that's for sure.

Another month, another column. This time, I wrote a long one about a week before deadline and decided at the last minute that it wasn't *quite* done, leaving me in my usual moments-before-deadline panic about putting something together. Ah, the highs and lows of zine coordinating...

This Month at *Maximum Rocknroll*

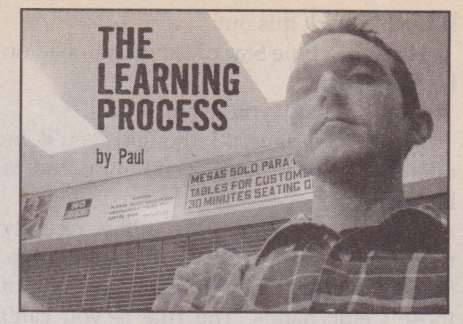
Hey! We found a new coordinator! After a few months of interviews, long meetings, cross-country phone calls, and an excess of pizza consumed, we selected our very own record reviewer, top ten contributor, and dedicated shitworker Chris Hubbard for the job. The decision was a difficult one—we had a number of excellent candidates to choose from—but in the end we were all really excited about the prospect of having Chris step up to the task. Hell, he's even been living in the house for over a year now so he's well used to the glazed-eye, 2 a.m. pot-of-coffee crunch of deadline time. And, despite the fact that he calls Deep Wound "overrated" in this month's reviews section, I have every confidence that he's going to do a stellar job when he picks up the reins next month.

Chris' arrival also means that this is the last issue of *Maximumrocknroll* that Paul and I will ever co-coordinate together. What a crazy thought, after spending the better part of the past 15 months spending so many late nights and early mornings (not to mention afternoons and evenings) working at each other's sides. Paul and I have a running joke that we're going to start numbering the things that we find ourselves saying to each other every day to save ourselves the trouble of having to communicate in full sentences. Like, instead of saying, "I'm going to boil some water for tea—want some?" or, "Have you called Mitch about his late-ass column?" we'd instead just say, "number two" or "number eleven," to which the other person would understand and respond accordingly. It's the kind of goofy thing you think of when you work so closely with a friend, but I find myself in these last days of our co-coordinatorship feeling wistful about Paul's coming absence, and bemoaning the loss of the bad inside jokes and little secret society we've come up with together. It'll take a long while to get used to the fact that he's not gonna be in my kitchen every day.

When Paul started I was pretty new here too, having only worked at the magazine for six or seven months, and his presence went a long way in keeping the workload manageable and—more importantly—making things around here fun. So, what can I say? Thanks, Paul, really. Don't worry, though; despite my melodramatic musing, Paul is gonna continue doing massive amounts of shitwork here at MRR, and y'all can keep up with him through his column as well as his near-weekly stints on MRR radio.

Vacation All I Ever Wanted

Just a few days ago, I arrived back in San Francisco after spending the better part of this past month in Spain on the first really substantial vacation I've taken since I moved here nearly two years ago. It was an amazing trip, over far too fast and too full of detail to keep totally straight in my head, let alone put down on paper (no one likes vacation stories anyway, it's kind of like looking at slide shows of family trips), but needless to say my trip was both totally fun and totally inspiring. I'd like to take this space to thank the friends both old and new who housed me, hung out with me, sold me Eskorbuto records, helped me get around, and generally showed me a good time. In particular, I owe a world of thanks to Teodoro and Juanma, who very generously and graciously opened their homes to me during my stay. And, of course, to Paco and Clara for the impetus to go in the first place and the reasons to do so.



Auf Wieder-schnitzel

Well, fuck, I guess this is supposed to be my "farewell" column. But if you think I'm gonna get all teary-eyed and shit, forget about it. I'm not going away—basically all that's changing is that I'll have a lot more time to skate or to sit at home listening to records. Say it with me: "Fuck yeah!"

So, I'm passing the very-heavy MRR coordinator torch to our resident archivist Chris Hubbard, who will have us all in his firm tyrannical grip in no time, I'm sure. I've seen him upstairs studying Tim Yo's well-worn-and-highlighted copy of Stalin's biography, and I have no doubt in my mind that Chris is (a) fanatical enough, (b) enough of a workaholic, (c) anal enough, and (d) insane enough to be one of the finest coordinators this zine has ever seen. Who knows what revolutionary changes will take place now? Maybe we'll start saying "7"" instead of "EP" in the reviews section, or we'll starting putting spaces before and after em-dashes again. These are turbulent times, indeed.

But Seriously, Folks

This year, my parents turned 60. (Each.) Which means that I must be at least 30 years old, maybe more, who knows? The other day my brother and I hopped the fence to the toxic-polluted Berkeley skate park and seshed the bowl for about a half an hour, then pooped out. We reminisced about when were kids and we'd skate for, like, five hours a day, every day. But then we looked on the bright side: We're both still able to skate, first of all. And nowadays, we can skate until we're exhausted and still have the rest of the day to do other stuff!

Here in Punkland, we're supposed hate (along with coaches, businessmen, and cops) our parents, but I like mine a lot. I can say with confidence that they've probably been to more punk shows than you have. Their record collections, on the other hand, not so good. The point is that they've always been there to support not only me, and my brother, but punk in general. They've gone to Gilman for nearly 20 years (shit, that means I must be at least in

my *mid*-30s), and donated time and equipment to MRR. I'm not gonna say they're the punkest parents ever (Jake Filth's mom would come to Gilman shows even when he wasn't there, and she could play a Crimpshrine sing on the piano!) but I *can* say they are the best parents ever.

This has nothing to do with either of those bogus Hallmark holidays that happen to fall around this time of year. I guess this is my roundabout way of saying, "I love you and I miss you" to my family and I'm looking forward to having a lot more time to hang out.

As for my other family, the punxes, specifically those who shitwork thanklessly month after month for this godforsaken rag, I wish to offer my most gracious and heartfelt thanks for letting me help take care of this beast. It was by far the most fulfilling and empowering thing I've ever done with my life.

Martin, Chris, and my main homey, Golnar, to you I give the biggest of ups. You guys are awesome and without you punk would rule so much less that I don't even wanna think about it. Take care of Tim's incorrigible 24-year-old baby, and don't let those spider webs in the review room get out of control. Oh, wait, I guess that'll be my job now that I don't have to answer emails all day... D'oh!

End bits:

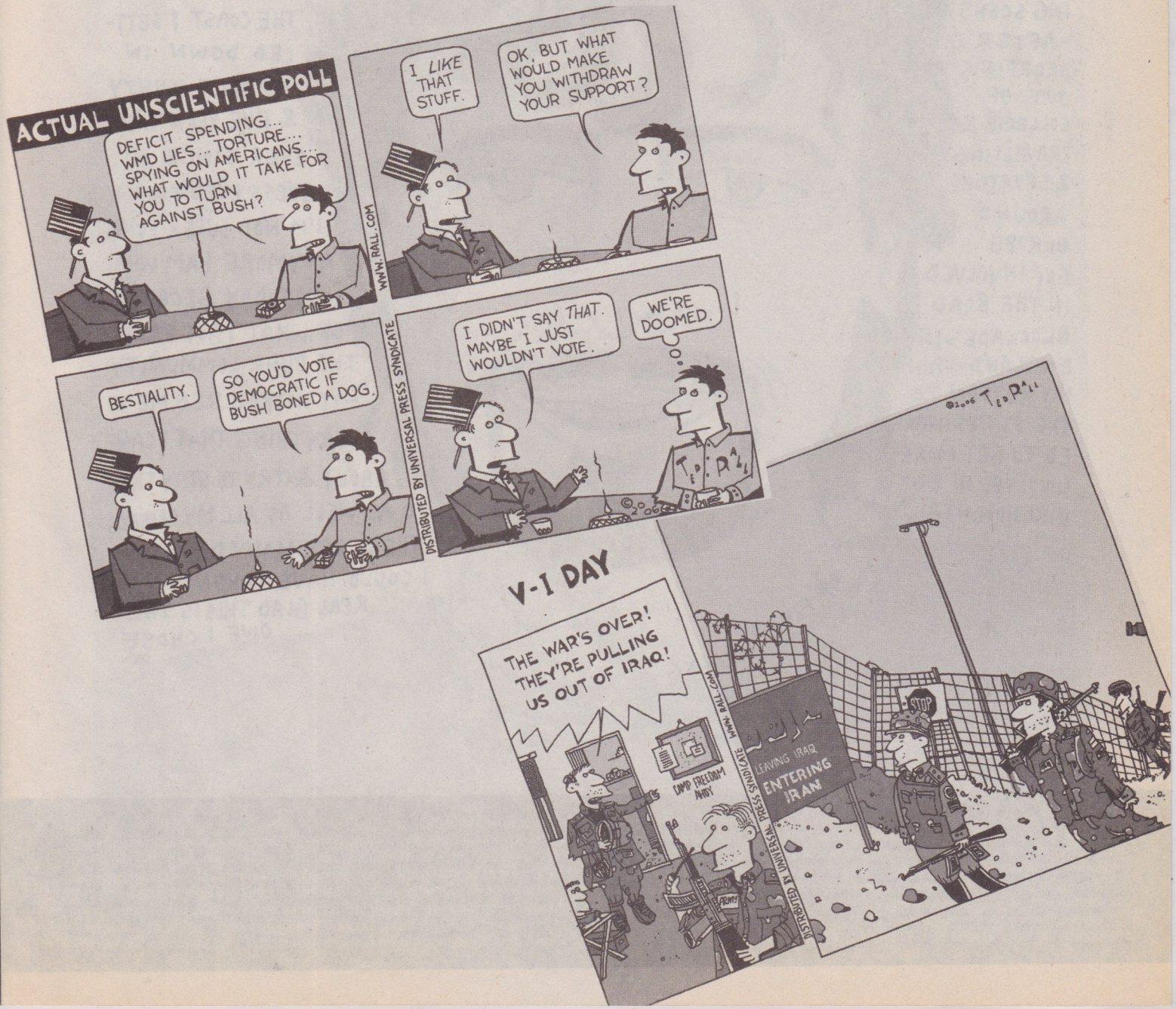
Thanks to all the millions of people who participated in Un Dia Sin Inmigrantes. (Especially my local grocery store and my favorite taqueria—I love you guys even more now.) I didn't hear anyone in the mainstream media call it a "general strike," but that's exactly what we gave them. I hope this is the first step to bringing May Day back to the US, and showing everyone that if enough of the "powerless" band together, we can change the fucking system for the better.

For more inspiration, go see *V for Vendetta*. Can you believe Hollywood made this movie?

Come see Surrender (dude, no, we're not a Cheap Trick cover band, we're fuckin' peace-punk) on tour in the US, Winnipeg, and Tijuana in May/June. More info on the computer-thingy at www.lastwhiteflag.org.

All the punks, May 25th, under the arch in St. Louis...quit whining and just go! See ya there.

Sometimes I like email.
paul@maximumrocknroll.com



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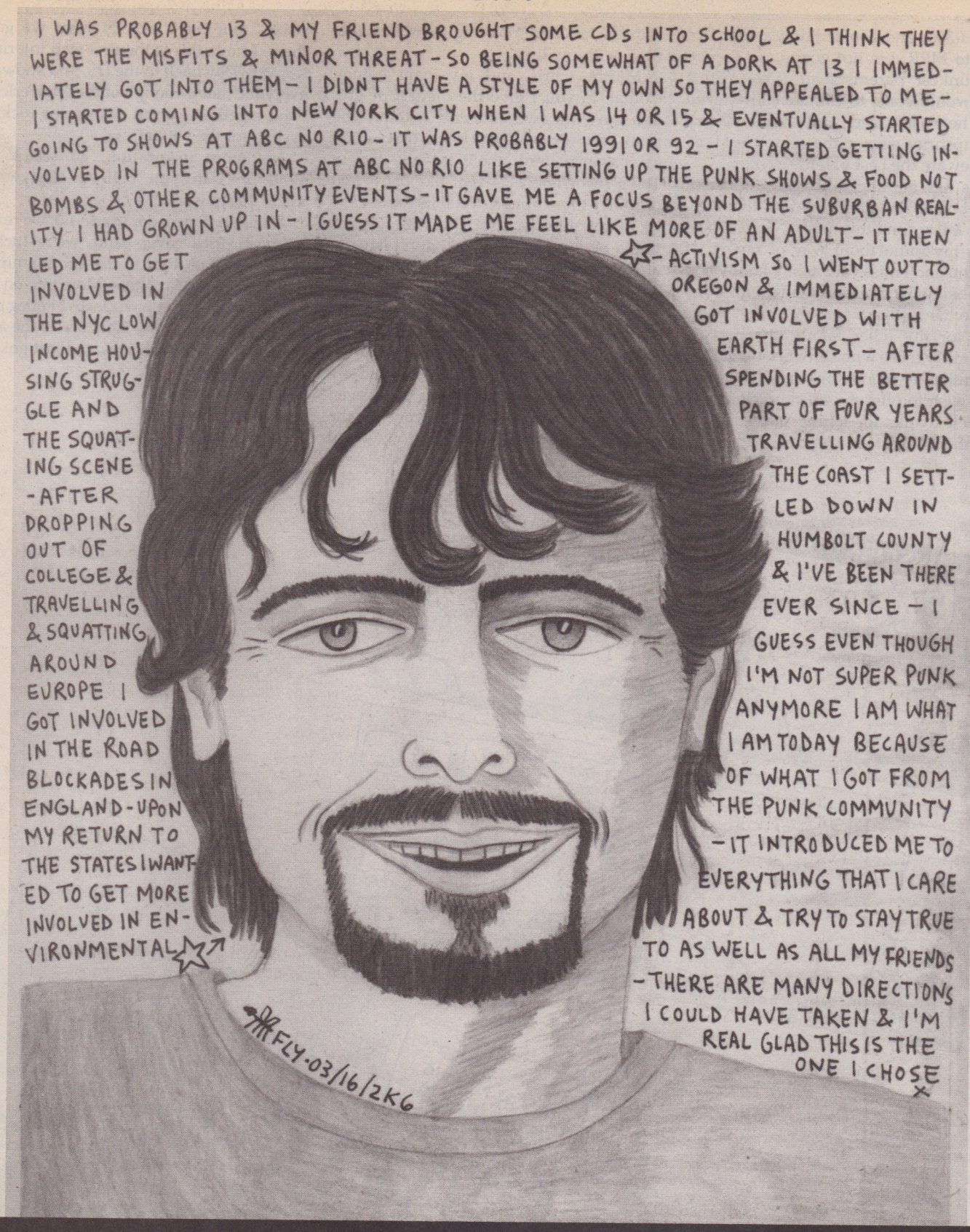

Shawnee Alexandri – 03/16/2K6 – Lower East Side NYC

I first met Shawnee at the punk matinees at ABC NO RIO in New York in the early '90s – Shawnee was always way too full of energy and enthusiasm but it was always totally sincere – he actually came over to my house where i was squatting & helped me do things like taping & plastering & sanding my walls which are all the steps you have to take before actually painting – if you are lucky enough to have walls! – & it was really great of him to take time to help me out when most of the punks were on their way to the beer olympics – Shawnee has always thrown all his energy into anything he is involved in & beleives in & i can respect that – currently he is living in Humbolt County, CA, working as a carpenter & soon to be contractor – both his family's vehicles run on biodiesel – to contact Shawnee email : shawnee12@hotmail.com thanks Shawnee for letting me draw you! to contact Fly email fly@bway.net – put MRR in the subject so i know its not spam – PEOP(le)s#3 zine is now available for $5 ppd. in the US – write to Fly, PO Box 1318, Cooper Stn, NYC, NY 10276 – Dog Dayz Zine & Total Disaster Comix are also both available for $5 each ppd. in the US

MRR NEWS

MRR NEWS FOR ISSUE #277 COMPILED BY ARIEL CELESTE & GOLNAR NIKPOUR

AT&T HELPS NATIONAL SECURITY ASSOCIATION SPY

From EFF press releases.

The Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF) filed a class-action lawsuit against AT&T on January 31, 2006, accusing the telecom giant of violating the law and the privacy of its customers by collaborating with the National Security Agency (NSA) in its massive and illegal program to wiretap and data-mine Americans' communications.

In December of 2005, the press revealed that the government had instituted a comprehensive and warrant-less electronic surveillance program that ignored the careful safeguards set forth by Congress. This surveillance program, purportedly authorized by the President at least as early as 2001 and primarily undertaken by the NSA, intercepts and analyzes the communications of millions of ordinary Americans. In the largest "fishing expedition" ever devised, the NSA uses powerful computers to "data-mine" the contents of these Internet and telephone communications for suspicious names, numbers, and words, and to analyze traffic data indicating who is calling and emailing whom in order to identify persons who may be "linked" to "suspicious activities," suspected terrorists or other investigatory targets, whether directly or indirectly.

But the government did not act-and is not acting-alone. The government requires the collaboration of major telecommunications companies to implement its unprecedented and illegal domestic spying program. AT&T Corp. (which was recently acquired by the new AT&T Inc., formerly known as SBC Comm) maintains domestic telecommunications facilities over which millions of Americans' telephone and Internet communications pass every day. It also manages some of the largest databases in the world, containing records of most or all communications made through its myriad telecommunications services.

The lawsuit alleges that AT&T Corp. has opened its key telecommunications facilities and databases to direct access by the NSA and/or other government agencies, thereby disclosing to the government the contents of its customers' communications as well as detailed communications records about millions of its customers, including the lawsuit's class members. The lawsuit also alleges that AT&T has given the government unfettered access to its over 300 terabyte "Daytona" database of caller information—one of the largest databases in the world. Moreover, by opening its network and databases to wholesale surveillance by the NSA, EFF alleges that AT&T has violated the privacy of its customers and the people they call and email, as well as broken longstanding communications privacy laws.

The lawsuit also alleges that AT&T continues to assist the government in its secret surveillance of millions of Americans. EFF, on behalf of a nationwide class of AT&T customers, is suing to stop this illegal conduct and hold AT&T responsible for its illegal collaboration in the government's domestic spying program, which has violated the law and damaged the fundamental freedoms of the American public.

On March 31 and April 5, 2006, EFF filed papers with the court asking that it order AT&T immediately to stop illegally disclose the contents of its customers' communications to the US government. In support of this motion, EFF filed numerous documents and declarations which evidence both the technology and behavior involved in AT&T's illegal activities. These include a declaration from Mark Klein, a retired AT&T technician, and J. Scott Marcus, a telecomm expert who formerly worked at the Federal Communications Commission. Due to the controversial nature of the evidence and the rules of the court, EFF filed the majority of these papers temporarily "under seal." However, we have asked the court to unseal them for public access as soon as possible. AT&T has a week in which to respond to our motion and explain why these document should not be made available in the public court file.

The EFF's case against AT&T has barely begun, yet it has already brought to light some fascinating details about the methods behind the NSA's alleged wiretapping abilities. Mark Klein, a retired AT&T engineer who is now participating in the case as a witness, has released a statement to the media in which he outlines many of the allegations that are currently under seal. Chief among them is his claim that AT&T installed powerful traffic monitoring equipment in a "secret room" in their San Francisco switching office at the behest of the NSA. "In 2002, when I was working in an AT&T office in San Francisco, the site manager told me to expect a visit from a National Security Agency agent, who was to interview a management-level technician for a special job. The agent came, and by chance I met him and directed him to the appropriate people.

In January 2003, I, along with others, toured the AT&T central office on Folsom Street in San Francisco—actually three floors of an SBC building. There I saw a new room being built adjacent to the 4ESS switch room where the public's phone calls are routed. I learned that the person whom the NSA interviewed for the secret job was the person working to install equipment in this room. The regular technician work force was not allowed in the room." Futhermore, San Francisco wasn't the only place such secret rooms were built; Klein claims that AT&T offices in Seattle, San Jose, Los Angeles, and San Diego also have them.

So what exactly is a Narus STA 6400? It's hard to get precise details for obvious reasons, but Narus does describe the system in general terms. Others have done a bit more digging and claim that the system can analyze more than 10 billion bits of data per second, and point out that the company sells its systems to governments worldwide.

Given the massive scale of the spy operation in the US (and this is only one company; it's not yet clear if the NSA has partnered with other telecom firms), it's growing increasingly difficult to believe that this is truly "targeted surveillance." The equipment used and the vast scale of the information being monitored both suggest that the NSA is sifting through massive amounts of user data and phone calls. Much of the information that passes through their spy system must therefore be domestic rather than international in nature. It is possible that phone calls, for instance, that begin and end in the US are simply passed through the system without being scanned, but if so, this must certainly tempt the NSA, which has only to tweak their settings to see all that new data. What is actually being monitored is still unclear, but it looks as though this trial could bring much of it to light.

The EFF has filed the legal briefs and evidence supporting its motion for a preliminary injunction in the case. After asking EFF to hold back the documents so that it could review them, the Department of Justice consented to EFF's filing them under seal—a well-established procedure that prohibits public access and permits only the judge and the litigants to see the evidence. While not a party to the case, the government was concerned that even this procedure would not provide sufficient security and has represented to the Court that it is "presently considering whether and, if so, how it will participate in this case."

"More than just threatening individuals' privacy, AT&T's apparent choice to give the government secret, direct access to millions of ordinary Americans' Internet communications is a threat to the Constitution itself. We are asking the Court to put a stop to it now," said Bankston. EFF's evidence regarding AT&T's dragnet surveillance of its networks includes a declaration by Mark Klein, a retired AT&T telecommunications technician, and several internal AT&T documents. This evidence was bolstered and explained by the expert opinion of J. Scott Marcus, who served as Senior Technical Advisor for Internet Technology to the Federal Communications Commission from July 2001 until July 2005.

The internal AT&T documents and portions of the supporting declarations have been submitted to the Court under a tentative seal, a procedure that allows AT&T five court days to explain to the Court why the information should be kept from the public. The NSA program came to light in December, when the New York Times reported that the President had authorized the agency to intercept telephone and Internet communications inside the United States without the authorization of any court.

CHINA PERFORMS WORLD'S SECOND FACE TRANSPLANT

by Kathy Jones, from www.foodconsumer.org

Chinese doctors have claimed that they have successfully performed a partial face transplant on a victim of a bear attack. The operation was performed at the Xijing Hospital, a military facility in the northwestern city of Xian. If these claims bear out, then China becomes only the second country to report a successful face transplant.

The 14-hour-long operation was performed on Li Guoxing, a hunter whose face had been badly disfigured after being attacked by a black bear in May 2004. Chinese state news agency Xinhua reported that Li had been living as a recluse since then.

The name of the donor was not revealed, however, since the family had requested that no information be provided. The hospital only said that the donor had been declared brain dead before the operation was performed. Doctors fitted in a new right cheek, upper lip and nose on Mr Li's face.

The Xijing Hospital released pre-operative photographs, which show that Mr Li's face was indeed badly disfigured with his right eye nearly closed, his right cheek and his lip badly ripped apart. A post-operative picture showed Mr Li with a tube in his mouth and his face covered with surgical scars.

Dr Guo Shuzhong, Director of the plastic surgery department at the military facility said that Mr Li was recovering quite well. However, he added that it would take at least six months for Li to feel the neurological sensation on his new face. "His wife may take a long time to adjust to his new face," Guo said.

Xijing Military Hospital released a statement saying that the patient was in good condition. "The operation was successful. It is predicted that the wounds can be healed within one week," it added. The hospital also claimed that the operation was more complicated than the one performed by French counterparts from the University Hospital in Amiens in November last year.

The 30-year-old hunter becomes only the second person in the world to receive a face transplant. Late last year, French surgeons had performed a similar surgery on a 38-year-old Frenchwoman named Isabelle Dinoire. Her pet Labrador, Tania, had attacked Ms Dinoire in May leaving her face severely disfigured.

She had no chin or lips to speak of and any food that she ate was not properly chewed and in most instances fell out of the mouth. Ms Dinoire had been given new nose, lips and chin by her French surgeons led by Jean-Michel Dubernard, the pioneer of hand transplants.

As with any transplant, a facial transplant also carries with it a significant risk of rejection. Patients will have to survive on immuno-suppressant drugs throughout their lives, thus increasing their chances of developing numerous infections, cancer, and liver and kidney failure. Moreover, the ethical basis of such transplants was heavily debated in the aftermath of Ms Dinoire's operation. But Professor Dubernard had stressed at that time the need to help out the patient, whose disfigurement was adversely affecting her quality of life. "We are doctors and we had a patient who was severely disfigured, who had difficulty talking and who dropped most of her food when she tried to eat because she had no lips," he said. "We had the chance to improve her appearance and to improve her quality of life, and the minute I saw her I had no hesitation about going ahead."

Getting used to a new face, however, will bring with it a massive psychological load on the patient. In the case of Ms Dinoire, extensive counseling had been undertaken prior to her operation, but it is not known if Mr. Li received similar support. Immediately after Ms Dinoire's operation, it was reported that an eleven-year-old Chinese girl named Liu Fangyuan would be the next patient to get a face transplant.

The General Hospital of Nanjing Military Command's research team was supposed to perform the procedure on Liu who had suffered extensive burn injuries at the hands of her aunt, who wanted to take revenge on her family.

The second successful face transplant will no doubt act as a trigger for similar surgeries throughout the world. In fact three American clinics that were planning to perform such procedures said that they had received a flood of applications. Doctors feel that medical considerations will have to be supported by a strong ethical basis before undertaking such procedures.

ARTISTS BECOME TARGETS IN RISING ATMOSPHERE OF INTOLERANCE IN IRAQ

From an article on www.electroniciraq.com

Local artists, actors and singers, who have tried to bring smiles to the faces of children living in deteriorating conditions, have been targeted by insurgents and militias who accuse them of indulging in un-Islamic activities.

"Artists are being threatened and killed because they want to change the reality of the country by helping people forget all the violence and death," said Said Kareem, senior official for the Iraqi Artists Association in the capital, Baghdad.

Some fundamentalist Muslim insurgents say that music is un-Islamic, and that people should only listen to verses from the Qur'an, the Islamic holy book. Acting, theatre and television, they say, tend to encourage bad behaviour and irreligious attitudes.

"Artists are being accused of promoting customs that affect the morality of traditional society," said Kareem. Nearly 80 Iraqis working in artistic professions have been killed since 2005, he added, while many acting troupes and performers have halted their work from fear that they could be the next victim of violence.

On April 22, two young actors were killed in Baghdad by a local militia for entertaining children through a television programme that works with students in the capital. The actors, 20 year-old Faud Radi and 21 year-old colleague Haidar Jawad of the "Happy Family Team" theatrical group, were killed after receiving previous threats. "They warned us by leaving threatening notes in the van that we use for our work," said Safa'a Eadi, another member of the group.

The attack, however, has failed to intimidate the acting troupe, and members say they plan to continue working. "We'll continue our performances for the happiness of the children," said Eadi defiantly.

Other local entertainers, however, say their line of work has become too risky. "I used to live for the theatre," said Yussef Ghadin, a local actor and singer. "Now, though, after two of our colleagues were killed by a local militia for working a 'devil's job,' I have to put this dream aside."

PALESTINIAN REFUGEE PROBLEM PERSISTS

From an article by Arjan El Fassed and Laurie King, www.electronicintifada.net

As people return to former war zones, global numbers of refugees are falling. The most protracted and largest of all refugee problems in the world, however, remains unresolved, says UNHCR in a major report on refugees published on Wednesday. UNHCR's report, "The State of the World's Refugees: Human Displacement in the New Millennium," examines the changing dynamics of displacement over the past half decade.

UNHCR states that the global number of refugees is 9.2 million—the lowest in 25 years. In a technical footnote on the statistical information provided in the report, the UNHCR notes that its mandate "covers all refugees, except Palestinian refugees residing in areas of operation of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). These Palestinian refugees are not included in UNHCR's statistics. Palestinian refugees living outside the UNRWA areas of operation, however, fall under the responsibility of UNHCR." Palestinian refugees that fall under UNHCR mandate—outside UNRWA areas of operation, include 240,000 in Saudi Arabia, 70,000 in Egypt, 23,000 in Iraq, 8,900 in Libya and 4,000 refugees in Algeria.

Identifying the major protracted refugee crises in the world in 2004, UNHCR methodology was based on the "crude measure of refugee populations of 25,000 persons or more who have been in exile for five or more years in developing countries."

According to UNRWA, there are 4,232,510 registered Palestinian refugees. UNRWA records include only those refugees displaced in 1948 (and their descendents) in need of assistance and who reside in UNRWA's areas of operation: the West Bank, Gaza Strip, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria. Under UNRWA's operational definition, Palestine refugees are persons whose normal place of residence was Palestine between June 1946 and May 1948, and who lost both their homes and means of livelihood as a result of the 1948 Arab-Israeli conflict.

This is a working definition for the purpose of determining eligibility for UNRWA services. UNRWA's services are available to all those living in its area of operations who meet this definition, who are registered with the Agency, and who require social and medical assistance. The number of registered Palestine refugees has subsequently grown over nearly six decades from 914,000 in 1950 to more than four million, and continues to rise due to natural population growth.

Based on various sources, BADIL, a research and advocacy center focusing on refugee rights, estimates that there are more than seven million Palestinian refugees and displaced persons. This estimate includes those Palestinian refugees displaced in 1948 and registered for assistance with UNRWA (4.2 million); Palestinian refugees displaced in 1948 but not registered for assistance (1.54 million); Palestinian refugees displaced for the first time in 1967 (753,000); internally displaced Palestinians within the state of Israel who have been denied the status of legal residents of recognized localities since 1948 (274,000); and the 1967 internally displaced Palestinians (150,000).

UNHCR's mandate does not extend to the majority of Palestinian refugees by virtue of Paragraph 7 (c) of the agency's Statute, which excludes persons who continue to receive protection or assistance from other organs or agencies of the United Nations. A similar provision excludes these refugees from the scope of the 1951 UN Refugee Convention. According to article 1D it, "shall not apply to persons who are at present receiving from organs or agencies of the United Nations other than the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees protection or assistance." Under the terms of the Convention, stateless Palestinian refugees living beyond the area of UNRWA operations are entitled to assistance and protection from UNHCR. "This leaves a 'protection gap' affecting Palestinian refugees who are not registered with UNRWA but live in its area of operations. In most cases they do not receive protection or assistance from UNHCR or UNRWA."

Unlike other persons considered as refugees under the 1951 Refugee Convention, the only exclusion and cessation clause applicable to Palestinian refugees is Article 1D. The only criterion for the cessation of refugee status for Palestinian refugees is the definitive settlement of the Palestinian refugee issue in accordance with relevant resolutions adopted by the UN General Assembly—i.e., implementation of UN Resolution 194(III).

Currently, UNHCR does not have an explicit mandate to provide international protection and seek durable solutions for all Palestinian refugees. UNHCR, UNRWA and other UN agencies should establish a coordination mechanism or secretariat for the exchange of documents, information, data and reports regarding their respective policies and operations. Such a mechanism would assist in the identification of specific gaps (short-term and durable solutions) in the international protection regime for Palestinian refugees.

Palestinians should engage UNHCR and other UN officials in a meaningful discussion regarding Resolution 194(III) in order to clarify the specific framework for durable solutions applicable to the Palestinian case and the status of Palestinian refugees under the 1951 Refugee Convention.

In 2001, former UNHCR Commissioner Ruud Lubbers stated that it is neither morallly acceptable nor politically sustainable to ignore the plight of refugees who have been confined to small areas and a legacy of poverty for nearly four generations. "The humanitarian aid and assistance that UNRWA provides to Palestinian refugees can never be enough." The report says that this aid will be required "as long as the issues of statelessness, prolonged military occupation, economic marginalization and vulnerability characteristic of the Palestinian refugee crisis are not addressed."

THE FUTURE IS ALMOST HERE: THE BIONIC MAN AS REALITY

From an article by Alok Jha The UK Guardian

The 1970s gave us the six-million-dollar man. Thirty years and quite a bit of inflation later we have the six-billion-dollar human: not a physical cyborg as such, instead an umbrella term for the latest developments in the growing field of technology for human enhancement. Helping the blind to see again, being able to carry enormous loads without the prospect of backache and a prosthetic robotic hand that works (almost) like a real one were some of the ideas presented at a recent meeting of engineers, physicists, biologists and computer scientists organised by the American Association of Anatomists.

Seeing through walls or zooming in on faraway objects were among the special talents of six-million-dollar man, Steve Austin. For his modern equivalent, scientists are working on ways to restore functional sight to those who have become blind through disease. Degenerative retinal diseases result in the death of the rods and cones, the cells responsible for light detection, at the back of the eye. Worldwide, more than 1.5 million people suffer from a form of inherited blindness called retinitis pigmentosa and, in an ageing population, loss of vision is increasingly common.

Daniel Palanker, a physicist at Stanford University in California, had the idea to bypass the dead rods and cones and to stimulate the cells of the inner retina with electrical signals directly. His bionic eye system is made up of a 3mm chip implanted into the retina and a pair of virtual-reality-style goggles containing a video camera. The goggles convert the video pictures into an infrared image. "The image is projected on to the retina and the retinal implant has photosensitive pixels that convert infrared light into pulses of electrical current, stimulating the cells in the retina," said Dr Palanker.

So far, he has only fitted rats and rabbits with the bionic eye. Human trials will begin in a couple of years and, when they do, Dr Palanker reckons the system will give people 20/80 vision—normal is 20/20, you need 20/40 for a driving license and 20/400 is the legal definition of blindness—allowing people to read large fonts and recognize faces. No cyborg could be complete without superhuman strength and Homayoon Kazerooni of the University of California, Berkeley, can help. "The technology we developed is a robotic device a person would wear and this way, the device would carry a major load and the person would not feel any load," he said.

Bleex has more than 40 sensors and a hydraulics system that, according to the inventors, work something like the human nervous system. The sensors feed information to a central computer brain, which continually calculates how to distribute the weight so that the wearer feels little or none of it. The military uses of Bleex are obvious—soldiers who can carry huge loads without getting tired would be more useful on any battlefield. There are plenty of civilian applications too: firemen who need to climb stairs with heavy equipment or rescue workers who need to take supplies into areas where vehicles cannot go.

LIBRARIANS WIN AS US RELENTS ON SECRECY LAW

By Anahad O'Connor, from the New York Times

After fighting ferociously for months, federal prosecutors relented and agreed to allow a Connecticut library group to identify itself as the recipient of a secret FBI demand for records in a counterterrorism investigation.

The decision ended a dispute over whether the broad provisions for secrecy in the USA Patriot Act, the anti-terror law, trumped the free speech rights of library officials. The librarians had gone to federal court to gain permission to identify themselves as the recipients of the secret subpoena, known as a national security letter, ordering them to turn over patron records and e-mail messages.

It was unclear what impact the government's decision would have on the approximately 30,000 other such letters that are issued each year. Changes in the Patriot Act now allow the government discretion over whether to enforce or relax what had been a blanket secrecy requirement concerning the letters.

Lawyers for the group, the Library Connection of Windsor, Conn., argued that their client was eager to participate freely in the debate last year over the reauthorization of the Patriot Act. But federal prosecutors asserted that the Patriot Act required that the group's identity remain secret and that the government would suffer irreparable harm if any information about its investigations became known.

The decision by the Justice Department to drop the case was applauded by the American Civil Liberties Union, which brought the lawsuit on behalf of the librarians. The civil liberties group said it would identify its clients at a news conference once court proceedings in the case are completed in a few weeks.

"We are obviously very much looking forward to the day where they can explain how it felt to be under threat of criminal prosecution for merely identifying themselves," said Ann Beeson, the civil liberties union's associate legal director. "The clients are happy that the fight over this gag is nearing its end."

Kevin J. O'Connor, the United States attorney in Connecticut, said yesterday that the government decided drop its case largely because the Patriot Act's secrecy provisions concerning national security subpoenas were changed to give the Federal Bureau of Investigation discretion in allowing recipients to identify themselves.

The government was also under pressure to drop its fight after mistakenly disclosing in court records the very information it was fighting to keep secret. Government lawyers failed to redact all of their references to the Library Connection in court filings, leading to the disclosure of the group's identity in The New York Times and other newspapers.

"Certainly that was a factor," Mr. O'Connor said. But he said "the legal basis" for the decision was the change in the Patriot Act giving the government the authority to allow recipients of the subpoenas to identify themselves.

"For both practical and legal reasons, we have determined that continuing to pursue this appeal does not make sense," he said.

Mr. O'Connor was in the process of appealing a decision by a federal district judge last September to allow the library to identify itself, saying the nondisclosure provision in the national security letter violated the library's First Amendment rights.

That appeal is pending in the United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit in New York.

Mr. O'Connor said that in light of the changes to the Patriot Act, the Justice Department would reexamine whether the secrecy requirements that apply to recipients of past national security letters should continue to be enforced.

He said the government would also make a determination when sending future letters whether the recipient would be prohibited from saying he had received one. George Christian, the executive director of Library Connection, a cooperative of 26 libraries that share an automated system, has answered "no comment" when asked about the case by reporters. He did not respond to several messages seeking comment last night.

According to court records, the federal government's national security letter to Library Connection last year asked Mr. Christian to "personally" hand over records that might be of use in a counterterrorism investigation and that he not disclose the matter "to any person."

But the group challenged the request in federal court, arguing through its lawyers that it wanted the ban lifted immediately. The group said that time was of the essence in lifting the ban because the Patriot Act was set to be reauthorized by Dec. 31 and, as a party with an interest in the matter, it wanted the right to speak out against the act.

United States District Judge Janet C. Hall agreed with the group, ruling last year that the order of silence should be lifted. But the federal government appealed the decision, ultimately preventing the group from weighing in on how the Patriot Act should be rewritten before the Dec. 31 deadline.

Ms. Beeson said yesterday that she believed the government's decision to drop the appeal was politically timed. "The issue over whether the government was using its Patriot Act powers to demand library records was one of the hot-button issues in this debate," she said. "And our clients could have been extremely powerful spokespeople in opposing the reauthorization of the act, because they had actually received one of those national security letters."

Now that the debate in Congress is over, she said, "There's no longer any reason to keep our clients quiet." Mr. O'Connor dismissed that argument and said that the language in the Patriot Act was such that the federal government had no choice but to insist that Library Connection refrain from speaking out.

"I know it's being perceived as a flip-flop, but that is simply not the case," he said

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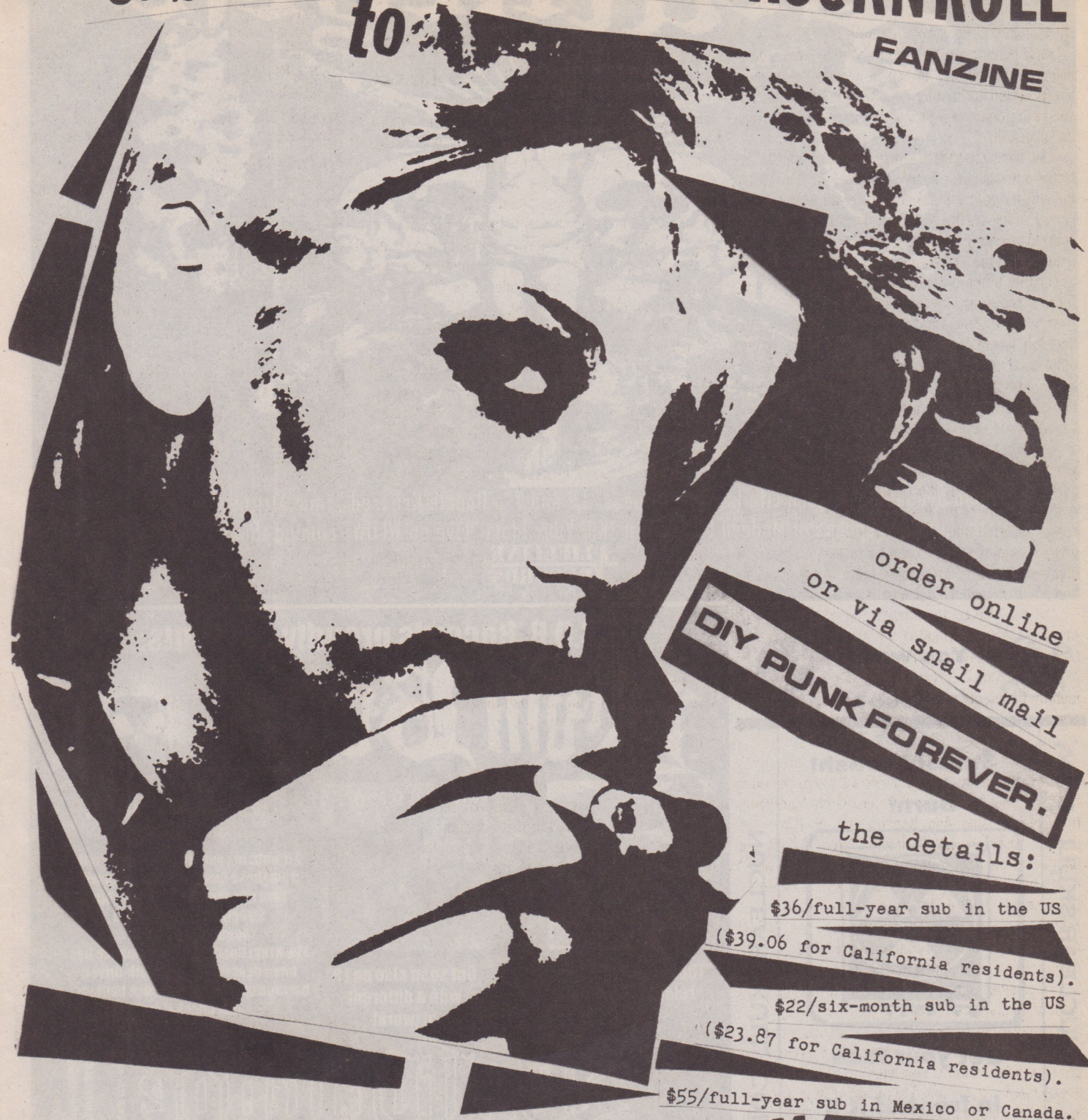

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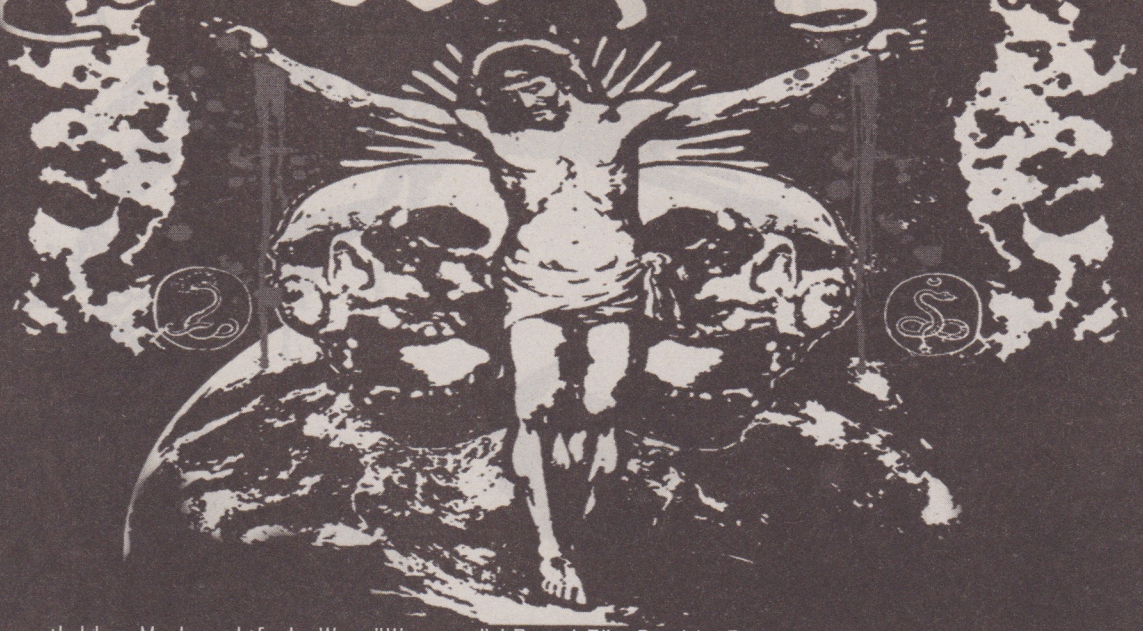

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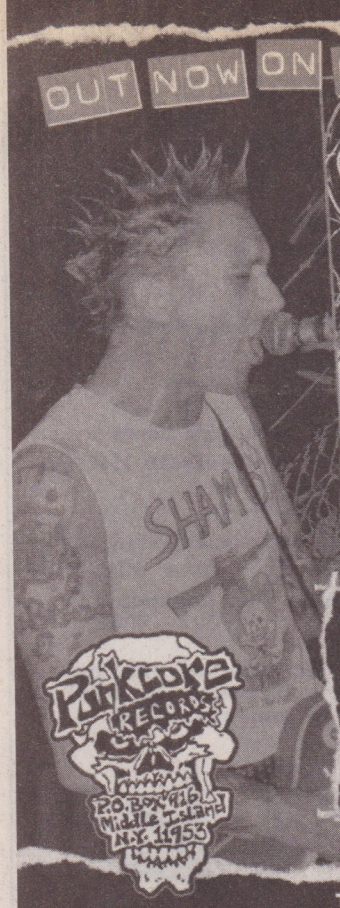

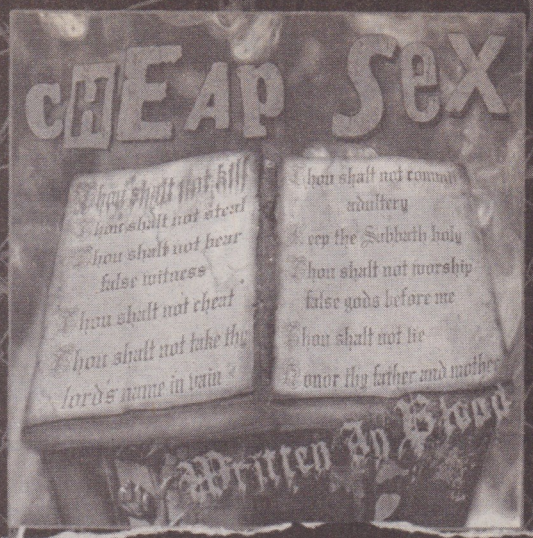

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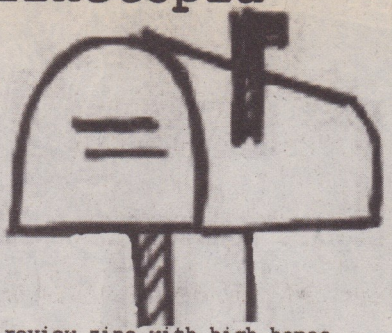

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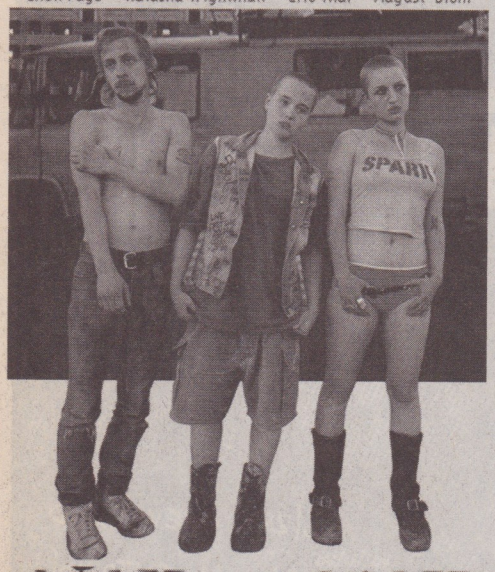

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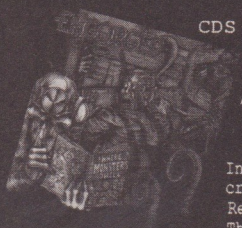

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Welcome to the hardcore/punk scene report from Poland. I hope it helps provide some information about things happening here and gives a general view on what's going on. There hasn't been a scene report from Poland in *MRR* for ages, so enjoy it.

I should write a general introduction to politics in Poland. There is not that much room for details, but there is definitely interesting stuff going on here.

Last year Poland entered the European Community and it got many people frustrated and supporting more right-wing and ultra-conservatist parties. Ideological bankrupcy and a high volume of curruption led to a complete fall-out of "left wing" parties (actually they're post-communist-era authorities who don't fit the term "left" very well). The Law and Justice party won the elections and the twin brother of the leader of the party is now president of the state. They're populist, right-wing ultra-catholics with some social programs. The new president was the mayor of our capital city, Warsaw—sort of NYC's Giulani way; more cops on the streets, less culture and public spaces, more ads, and open hatred towards gay people. He is known for refusing gay/lesbian marches for basic public freedoms. At the same time he supported extreme nationalist and fascist groups who violently attacked demonstrators. Out of the frustration, the Equality Parade was organized and 3000 people including gay and lesbian activists, artists, some politicians, journalists, punx, anarchists, socialists, etc. demonstrated illegaly in the streets of Warsaw.

Blatant hatred of homosexuals is the new public rule in Poland and some extreme politicians are trying to force new laws making it illegal for gays and lesbian to work in education and health care.

One of the first things done by the new government was closing down the ministry of equal status of women and men, trying to put down women issues and rights while using the term "family" in this place. There's also discussion about more extreme anti-abortion laws (even in the case of rape) and in-vitro issues in Poland.

It seems like there is more pressure to cut public rights and freedom to speech. Many journalist have legal problems with some heads of political parties. There's a feel of censorhip coming above our heads, this time with a new face. Artists that use religious imagery in their critical works have some serious legal problems now.

Strong of the more extreme right-wing parties have influence in parliament now, like the LPR (Polish Families League), an openly nationalist and religious fundamentalist party consisting of some members (including leaders) of the Mlodziez Wszechpolska Organization. Before World War II the MW was a racist and extremely anti-semitic organization close to the roots of the Polish fascist movement. In the mid-'90s it was reactivated and mostly Nazi skinheads took part. It's not that much different now as you can see mostly white-power skinheads at their anti-gay or anti-feminist demonstrations. Anyway, they developed well around the country, financially and politically backuped by the LPR. Leaders of the MW are trying to put new image on the organization as a patriotic intellectuals. Some of them are members of parliament, so yes, we have some people coming from the Nazi skinhead scene there.

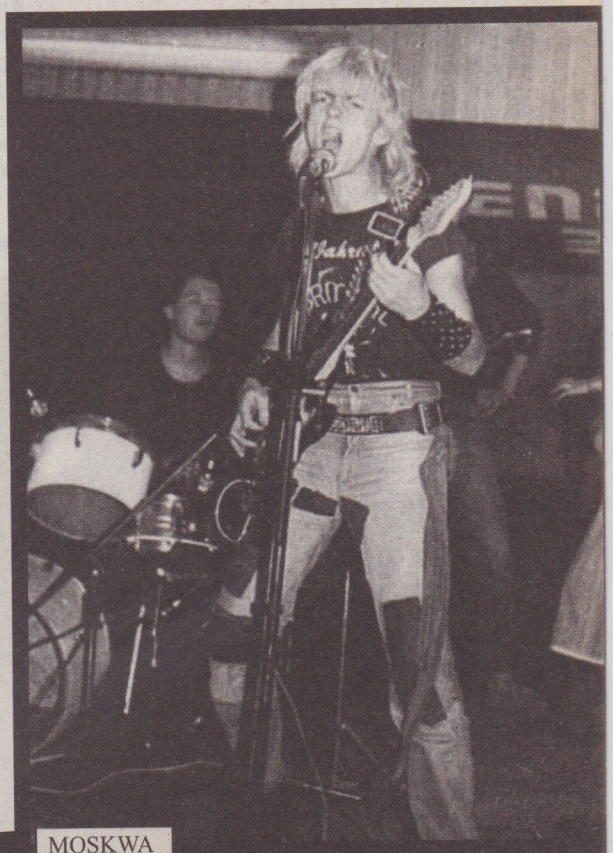
One of the biggest phenomena of recent years is a radio station called Radio Maryja. Sponsored by local churches, and many Catholics, as well as Polish right-wing communities worldwide, it's one of the biggest influeces on today's political reality and tendencies. It's organized like the mafia, with one leading priest, Rydzyk, who has complete power over its structure. They're preaching extreme xenophobia, racism and anti-semitims on the airwaves. Even Catholic church authorities lose control over it and they have some serious conflict between each other. It's the fundamentalist face of Polish Catholics that shows its ugly head.

There are a few reasons for the Right-wing and and ultra-Catholic sentiment. One of the them is definitely the death of the pope, John Paul II. It's made the whole country as crazy place to live. It's hard to imagine or understand what happened during whole week after his death in people's minds. Another reason is the anti-EU propaganda of right-wing parties and churches about the moral bankrupcy of the Western world.

When the faces in the government and parliament changed and views moved drastically to the right, the new government decided to keep Polish in troops in Iraq. Poland takes one of the biggest roles in the occupation of Iraq, after the US and the UK, even though most of the public is anti-war and against participation in Iraq. Anyway, it's excellent business for the companies that are hungry for the contracts. It works better for Poland's position on international level and also keeps close relations with the White House, which is far more important to Poland than working on good relations with any European country. Actually, relations with our neighbors, Germany and especially Russia, are really bad now.

There's much more going on so I'd recommend researching the current political situation in Poland. I don't think it should be ignored by rest of the world. Like it was proved before, things going here have serious impact on Europe. All these tendencies are rooted in Polish history: fear and a feeling of political, cultural, and economical alienation. It reflects how people are afraid to lose their national identity and tradition in globalization or corporate capitalism. There's a feeling of being second-class European citizens, being cheap worker for the rich West. In recent months, thousands of people have left Poland to work in countries like the UK, Ireland, or Sweden. It's like a massive migration going on. The hardcore punk scene is Poland is affected by it—many bands have split up because members have left Poland to find new jobs.

This country suffered so much during the past. People are aware of it, and, mixed with strong nationalist, populist, xenophobic and fundamentalist tendencies on a scale that was never experienced during recent



MOSKWA

democratic years in Poland, it's getting dangerous.

Well, enough on politics, let's move on to main program, the scene report. All of the stuff mentioned above sounds terrible but, well, this is not the worst place to live, and we still have many dedicated bands, fanzines, activists, and supporters who are doing positive things. There's are still many bands coming to play, and it works out well.

As maybe some of you know, Poland has had strong tradition of punk/hardcore since the scene started in the '70s, and many great bands played in the '80s, like **DEZERTER, MOSKWA, REJESTRACJA, ABADDON, TZN XENNA, ARMIA, SIEKIERA,** and many more. Those bands were absolutely brilliant and later bands hardly reached their volume in the music, anger and lyrics. I can definitely recommend releases by those bands (hardcore and punk fans interested in '80s stuff shouldn't ignore countries outside of the Western world). Many of those bands broke up or got commercialised. Some of them are playing again, reunited in the wave of '80s punk revival that has happened in Poland in the last 2-3 years. One of the main influences was publishing book called *Punk Rock Later* by a journalist from the biggest newspaper in Poland, and who organised a few festivals with the same name (with thousands of people), and has made some controversy among the punk crowd.

In the late '80s and early '90s a serious DIY scene started out of the frustration point reached by punk movement, with labels like Qqryq or Nikt Nic Nie Wie, and several bands. The collapse of the old system helped to build better communication and networking, with more releases, fanzines, shows and other sorts of activities (animal rights, environmental, pacist, anarchist, etc). At that time a big wave of raging fast and thrash hardcore was on the rise, with many bands who are not very well remembered now, such as **HC P, UOM** (first straight edge band in Poland, started in 1985), **THE CORPSE, NADZOR, SKTC, POLITICAL VERMIN, TOTAL ATTACK, CONFUSION, CHAOS, MORTAL TASSAK, KARA SMIERCI, F.O.B.** and many more.

Most of them left some demos and nothing more. Much luckier were bands who existed around the '90s. Thanx to the growing number of labels they were able to release their own CDs , LPs, 7"s and of course hundreds of tapes. A few bands from this period are very well-known outside of Poland: **POST REGIMENT**, they're stuff is incredible and most of them are still active; **APATIA** started out of HC P, but with more complex hardcore and great lyrics; **HOMOMILITIA** was a raging fast hardcorepunk band with female and male vocals and the first Polish band to address issues of homophobia or sexism. In a similar vein was **SANCTUS IUDA**. **CYMEON X** has been the most important straight edge band, playing fast old-school hardcore mixing Youth Of Today with Manliftingbanner. A wave of anarcho-punk and crustcore show up with bands like **GUERNICA Y LUNO, AMEN, SILNA WOLA, DISGUSTING LIES, PIEKLO KOBIET, MONEY DRUG, ANTI HOSTILITY** and many more. Folk and reggae tunes mixed up with punk bands like **ALIANS** or **SWIAT CZAROWNIC**. New-school sXe hardcore started with bands like **RESPECT**. More NYHC sounding bands were **SCHIZMA** and **1125**. **ZLODZIEJE ROWEROW** was into a more emotive sound in their hardcore.

Nowet's talk about current hardcore punk scene in Poland. It's not as massive as in the '80s, definitely smaller and more diverse and divided than in the '90s. Anyway, there's still some stuff going on.

I won't talk about any major label bands, it means that I'll skip **DEZERTER**. It's one of the best and intelligent band ever in Poland, their '80s stuff just rips. Their 1st full length LP was released on Maximum RocknRoll Records with the help of Joey Keithley of DOA (DOA and Youth Brigade were the first foreign hardcore bands playing in Poland).

I'm including bands of all genres, even metalcore stuff that's so popular this days, NYHC sounds, and also some Oi! and street punk bands, whether such bands care about *MRR* or not. I'll write mostly on bands with released records, and I'll mention some of the more interesting new bands in my opinion. I can't give all the contacts, just feel free to write to the labels for any contacts to the bands or directly to me (address at the end of the report).

BANDS

WLOCHATY — This band has been around since the early '90s. It's powerful anarcho-punk in the vein of CONFLICT with some '80s Polish HC punk influences and very good political lyrics. They've played many shows around Poland but also some in Germany and Czech (supporting Conflict on one of their recent tours). They have seven full-length LP/CDs released and two 7"s. Their recent releases are *Dzien Gniewu* LP/CD (LP on Nikt Nic Nie Wie, CD on Lou and Rocked Boys) and live CD.

SCHIZMA — The most popular band in the NYHC style here. Angry, in your face, tough lyrics. They've been playing for around 15 years or so but have had many line-up changes in this period. Schizma released five CDs , a 10", a MCD, three 7"s and four tapes. Their last CD is out on Shing Records called *XIII*. Their upcoming CD with LESPIRIT DU CLAN (France) soon on this same label.

ALIANS plays punk with elements of reggae, ska, and folk. They're a very well-know band over here. They started in the early '90s, did few European tours and released five CDs , a MCD, two 7"s and one demo. Their last CD is *Pelnia* on Pasazer Records.

APATIA — One of the longest running hardcore band here. Still deeply rooted in DIY punk ethics after all these years… They started after their prevous band split up—the legendary HC/thrash unit HC P, who did an incredible 7" for Resistance Productions from Switzerland in 1989. Apatia's music is original sounding hardcore, taking some influences from old bands like Verbal Assault, with more direct and straightforward HC and very good, intelligent lyrics. Last year their guitarist left the band, he was the main person responsible for the music and lyrics, but the band continues. They released five full length CDs , two 7"s and 7 tapes (mostly live). Check out their

APATIA (BOTH PICS)

latest CD "Manipulacja-zniewolenie" on Trujaca Fala Records.

1125 — A very well known band playing sort of mix of NYHC sound with some metal and some old-school HC touch. Along with Schizma they were responsible of the big wave more "tuff" sounding bands of the late '90s. They released five full length CDs and split 7" with Within Reach from Sweden. Their last CD is released on DFF Records. I'm not sure if the band will continue, as one of their main member lives in UK now.

MOSKWA is back again after years. It was one of my favourite bands of the '80s. Powerful DISCHARGE-ish HC/punk with original Polish sound. I've seen several their shows after their reunion and they're good and ass-kicking. They have five full-lengths already, the first one from 1987, but I recommend checking their amazing '84–'86 period. Their second LP was boring, heavy rock stuff. There's also a live CD released but their last two releases are great—two CD early discography on now defunct Czarny Kot Records and CD version of their classic demo from 1986 on Zima Records. They appeared on some comps too, like *Smelling Just Another Bad Breath* and *Network Of Friends 2*. If you want to check out some Polish hardcore punk history, this band is a must.

SUNRISE used to be the biggest vegan sXe metalcore band in Poland, but after lineup changes they're not 100% anymore... Anyway, it's the most popular metalcore band over here and well known throughout Europe, playing tons of shows and festivals around the continent. They have two full-length CDs , a 10"/MCD, a split LP/CD with LIAR (Belgium) and another MCD release, a 10" and a tape. Theie latest full-length is the *Traces to Nowhere* CD on Lifeforce Records from Germany, and their early discography CD is on the way on New Eden Records (US) and Lifeline Records (Poland) as well as a split with MONSTER from Germany.

UPSIDE DOWN has been around for twelve years or so... Since the beggining they were one of the most melodic punk bands, into the NOFX/PENNYWISE thing. They have four CD releases out, and latest one just put out recently is *Master Copy* on Mami Records.

ANALOGS — Very well known in the Oi!/street punk genre, several releases out on Jimmy Jazz Records.

CELA NR 3 — An old '80s band into RAMONES stuff and melodic, melancholic punk with depressing lyrics. Their original singer died in the mid-'90s but the band has continued since then. They have three full-length CDs out and some tapes throughout the years. Their recent CDs are the *Z Dedykacja Dla Kurdupla* discography double-CD and *Miasto*— both on Pasazer Records.

DISGUSTING LIES — One of the very few bands who survived the big crust-punk era of '95/'96. They're still into the fast, crusty style and political lyrics. They have two LPs, a 10" and two 7"s (one, a split with FACT, released in Japan). Their last release is a split LP with Italian band CAMPUS STERMINII on Agipunx Records and Desastro Sonoro Records (both Italian).

ABADDON

EYE FOR AN EYE

ABADDON — One of a few legendary bands from the '80s who started playing again in the last few years. They did the classic *Wet Za Wet* LP for New Wave Recs from France in 1987 and appeared in such classic comp LPs as *Fala* ('84) and *Jak Punk To Punk* ('86). Back then it was great sounding straightforward HC punk, now there is a bit more rock in their sound, but still powerful, to the point, angry HC punk with critical views in the lyrics. Their brand new LP/CD *Godzina Krzywd* is out now, CD on Lou And Rocked Boys Records and LP format on Nikt Nic Nie Wie. They have also two boot 7"s released. Abbadon is a first Polish HC punk band ever to tour the US; it happened in 2003 and they did several shows on the East Coast.

PRAWDA — Typical Polish punk music having some older guys in the lineup. One of the biggest band in this genre. They have several releases out, the latest one is *Radio Swoboda* CD on Lou and Rocked Boys.

THIRD DEGREE — This band has been around almost ten years or so, coming from the hometown of Polish death metal legends VADER... In the past their sound was more of a grinding crust thing, now it's definitely heavier and more metal sounding grind than crust… No surprise, living under the shadow of metal kings from Vader. Third Degree has some releases out: two CDs and two split 7"s out—with HEWHOCORRUPTS from US and UNHOLY GRAVE from Japan. The latest one is their *Outstay* CD on Selfmadegod Records.

INKWIZYCJA — This band has some legendary status in the Polish hardcore/punk scene. They started in the early '90s out of the first straight edge band from Poland, called UOM. Inkwizycja become the most important band of that era and first wave of a more politically aware DIY scene that raised after the collapse of the old "communist" system. Actually, their classic first full-length LP called ...*Na Wlasne Podobienstwo* is the first DIY vinyl hardcore and punk release ever in Poland (on Nikt Nic Nie Wie) as in the '80s only the state-run record label had the right to produce any music. Their music was powerful, fast, angry hardcore with some heavier parts and their lyrics were some of the best I've read from a Polish band. They were well known for their very critical anti-religious, anti-church stance. The early '90s was a time when we experienced a wave of religious fundamentalism and a strong position of the church in politics and daily life. The lyrics of the band were great, written like poems about Polish traditions, norms, and mentality. It made a huge impact on many of the hardcore and punx of that era, including me. Inkwizycja still exists, albeit not so active and not that important for many younger generations, but for sure they're still doing their thing. There's more rock element in their music now but it's still decent sounding HC/punk. They have two full-length CD/LPs and one 7". Ther latest release is their CD *Stare fotografie* on Nikt Nic Nie Wie.

PROFANACJA — This band was around in the late '80s through the mid '90s and were quite silent for a while before coming back for some shows

and their first full-length CD, after tons of tape releases. Their sound is very rockish punk with intelligent lyrics; their singer is a very good writer. Recently, their second CD *Znak* was put out on Pasazer called.

ZLODZIEJE ROWEROW — Definitely one of the best bands around, still very active after 13 years. Great, passionate emotive hardcore in the vein of VERBAL ASSAULT or ENDPOINT but with some fast forward hardcore/punk tunes. Yet, their lyrics are very good—social, political, and personal, written in an intelligent and touching way. They have released two full-length CDs, a demo and three live tapes/CD-Rs. Their latest release is a full-length CD called *Ten Moment* on my label, Refuse Records. Check it out! They've also appeared on the *New Days Rising* comp. CD on France's Boisleve Records. One of the very few bands listened to by different factions of the scene, from sXe/hardcore kids to anarcho-punx, etc. The singer of Zlodzieje Rowerow used to sing in a great band called **APRIL** who split up recently (two CDEPs out on Pasazer).

EVIL contains members of bands like INFEKCJA and SELF HATE. Expect some really insane heavy stuff in the crust/metal vein with political and nihilist lyrics. Their two CDs are available, latest one is called *XII-XX* on NIC Records and Malcontent Records.

EYE FOR AN EYE — This band from southern Poland has been around for a few years, but they came into full effect in recent years. After releasing a tape they hooked up with Pasazer Records who did their full-length CD; the LP version was released in Finland on Kamaset Levyt. It's good sounding, powerful, female fronted hardcore/punk with a variety of influnces—fast hardcore, a bit heavier NYHC hardcore, traditional Polish punk, a dose of POST REGIMENT, and even some Oi influence. If they would skip the NYHC and Oi they would be much better in my opinion, but still decent and good stuff. The first non-sXe band in the world to cover CHAIN OF STRENGTH's "True Till Death." Their new split CD with HUNKIES is on Pasazer and Jimmy Jazz.

LENIWIEC — Very melodic punk rock from southern Poland, mixed with some reggae and ska influences. I like their strongly anti-fascist attutude. They released a full-length CD and a split CD with HOUBA from the Czech Republic on Pasazer Records.

KREMLOWSKIE KURANTY is a very rock-sounding punk band; another Polish band around ten years on their backs. There are two CD releases, the recent one is *Zanim* on Nikt Nic Nie Wie Recs.

19 WIOSEN is not an easy band to describe. It's more like a cabaret punk band with not very serious lyrics, or well, very serious in some ways. They've been active for over 10 years and they have a full-length CD on Nikt Nic Nie Wie with their stuff from recent years called "11 zim" as well as split LP with Starzy Singers and some tapes.

INFEKCJA — Very fast, political, anarchist HC/punk. Their members are pretty active in many political projects like squatting, anarchism., Food Not Bombs, etc.

Some years ago they started the first chapter of FNB in Poland. Anyway, they're well known around from their raging, heavy, fast crust assault. They have released three 7"s and a demo. They didn't release anything for a while but last year they finally did a 12" EP called *Przegrani* on Trujaca Fala Records (also available on CD). One of the best and most dedicated bands around

SILENCE is another one of the best bands around. Intellgent lyrics, good attitude. They play powerful sounding HC/punk in the vein of TRAGEDY, HIS HERO IS GONE and touch of CATHARSIS. They released their debut 7" and later they did a 10" LP for French label Les Nains Aussi. The same label later released their full-length LP called *Echoes of Depression*. Tha CD versions of both releases are avaialble from a good new Polish label called Yama-Dori Records, and Sadness of Noise Records, run by Skubi, singer of Silence. They did two European tours already. Check them out! Their bass player used to be the singer of ANTICHRIST. Anyway, I'm not sure about their future as it's another band suffering from migrations to the UK and other European countries.

PIGNATION — Blasting powerviolence stuff, kinda well-known here and there, recently turned into metalcore stuff. They have released a 12" on Swedish label Putrid Filth, a split MCD with INFLEXIBLE on Shing Records and a split 7" with SU196 from Japan. They're latest release is the *Devastating Life Scheme* 7" EP/MCD on well known US label Deep Six Records. This guys are co-editors of *Violence* zine and run a small label called Impeachment. Some of them started a new band, SHACKLED DOWN. One of the most well known Polish band outside of Poland.

ANTIGAMA — This band is from my town and what they're playing is definitely grindcore but with lots of different influences… They're very good musicians so don't expect poor sounding grind here. The drummer of Antigama is incredible. Their guitar player used to play in a band called GARDEN OF WORM (who released a 7" around '92). The debut MCD by Antigama was released on an Italian label and they later they did a split CD with JAN AG (singer of AGATHOCLES from Belgium), then a 7" and a split CDEP with BASTARD SAINTS on Antiself Productions. Their latest LP/CD called *Discomfort* is on Selfmadegod. A new 7" and split 7" are on the way.

JUDE — Apocalyptic, noisy sludge HC punk with similarities to NEUROSIS, DYSTOPIA, and RORSCHACH but with a much more with industrial influence. They have visuals at their shows and they do some art, movies etc. outside of the music scene. Their lyrics deconstruct the darkest parts of the human nature, but also try to get deeper and analyse fascism and totalatarianism. They always have lots of interesting things to say, but definitely not in a direct way. They released a split 10" with DYSMORFOFOBIA on Self Industry Records and one tape, and later released their first full length CD—it's called *Combat Exhaustion* on Skylark Records. Despite controversy over their name, especially in Germany, it's the one of the most antifascist bands in Poland, and their hometown Lodz was the biggest Jewish community until World War II. Wiktor, their singer, used to booking shows in the '90s (like NAUSEA and many more) and he did one of the best zines from the '90s called *Zygoma*. His latest zine is called *Plus Ultra*.

LOST is heavy, angry hardcore/punk with a female singer (ex-singer of one of the best bands in the '90s, HOMOMILITIA). They have political lyrics and their music has some metal/crust influences. They released a 7" EP on Malarie Records from Czech and their latest release is *Strach/Fear* (LP/CD) on Schandmaul Records from Germany and Malarie Records from Czech. If you haven't heard them yet, you definitely need to check out their releases. Recently they were joined by second guitarist Skinu (ex-DISABLE), but their drummer left the band to live in Western Europe.

FILTH OF MANKIND — Another good band outta here. Heavy and dark metal/crust/punk in the vein of AMEBIX or MISERY. They've already released a CD and a 7". Their latest release is a CD called *The Final Chapter* on Japanese label HG Fact Records. Their guitarist runs the Scream Records label. Their new split CD is in the works.

JANUSZ REICHEL is a guy playing songs on acoustic guitar with really good, intelligent lyrics. Janusz used to play in the late-'80s band ZIMA. He's very deep into environmental issues in daily life but his songs cover many issues; very good, critical lyrics about police brutality, domination of the Catholic church in Poland, pro-squatting songs and more. He has a full-length CD on Pasazer Records and a few tapes.

REGRES is a good sounding, fast, old-school hardcore band that started a few years back. Good, positive attitudes with a socially aware, caring message. This band released their full-length CD called *Punk Rock Pozytyw* and debut tape on Refuse Records. Their new CDEP called *W Naszych Dloniach* will be out very soon. Check them out if you're looking for decent old-school sounding hardcore. These guys are very active in booking shows and have a new label called In Our Hands.

ZLODZIEJE ROWEROW

CRUSH ALL FAKES

CZOSNEK — Punk/HC with good lyrics and an original sound. Their drummer is the guy who has run Nikt Nic Nie Wie Records for ages and some members were in the early '90s band ULICA. They released an LP called *Nielegalna Pornografia Z Wykorzystaniem Dzieci, Zwierzat I Roslin* on Malarie Records and NNNW with a funny board-game "King of punk"... so, you can play with other punx while listening to their album. They have a debut tape out as well.

INRI — Rockish melodic punk. Started over 10 years ago but still active... Several tape releases on their backs (some of them on the late, great Qqryq Productions) and also a CD out on Pasazer Records called *Glos W Sprawie Zasadniczej*.

ULICZNY OPRYSZEK — Very Polish punk rock sound, one of the main bands out of tons of bands in this genre. Melodic punk, but sounding decent. After many years and some tapes they put out a full-length CD *Mlodziez punkowa 33 1/3* on Pasazer Records.

BIALA GORACZKA is one of the best anarcho-punk bands in the few last years... After some members left Poland they're not as active anymore as in the past. Good political lyrics and a very original sound for this kind of music. Taking their influences from old anarcho-punk and old Polish HC/punk mixed with some BERURIER NOIR and some more melodic stuff... You should definitely check them out—they have a few tapes and one full-length CD *Spokoj* on Pasazer Records. They did some European tours as well; they're really good on stage.

ANTIDOTUM is one of the oldest punk band from my hometown, Warsaw. They've been around for over ten years but just recently they finally managed to release their first full-length CD called *Testowane na ludziach* on Nikt Nic Nie Wie Recs. If you dig bands like POST REGIMENT you should definitely check them out. Straightforward, good sounding, female fronted HC/punk and interesting political lyrics. I see them playing more shows recently, including Germany or the UK.

KLINIKA — Another band with 10 years on their backs. Female fronted, melodic punk with some reggae and folk influences. They have one full-length CD released called *Tourdion* on Nikt Nic Nie Wie and one tape. A new full length release is in the works.

P.E.S.D. — Brand new band of old veterans—Smok, bass player of POST REGIMENT fame and singer of the late-'80s band TRAGIEDIA. It's great to see them active in bands again. Smok has been busy doing recording and mastering work for dozens of Polish HC/punk bands. His participation in the scene over here is priceless. Their new band has some influences of Tragiedia and '80s Polish stuff but is still very original and unique sounding, using lots of samples, electronics, etc., all it mixed well with good, angry lyrics like Tragiedia used to have. Their debut full-length CD *Politikarepoizonekurvae* is out now on Trujaca Fala Recs.

AGAINST ALL ODDS — They used to play in the mid-'90s and they did at least one tape with over 20 songs of fast, powerful, forward anarcho-punk with two male and one female singer. I was sure that band had disappeared with the whole wave of anarcho/crusty bands some years later. I was surprised to find that they are still active—a few months ago they released a full-length CD called *Punk Roots* on Zima Records. They're still into critical, fast punk stuff with some WLOCHATY/GUERNICA Y LUNO influences.

MIND POLLUTION is a female-fronted, heavy punk/HC/crust band from Poznan, taking their influences from bands like KYLESA, TRAGEDY, or NEUROSIS. This is definitely something for fans of slower, heavier sounding punk/crust with a political message. This band has played a good amount of shows, released a demo, and recently a full-length CD was released on Yama-Dori Records. Members of the bands are very active in booking shows and keepin' the DIY spirit alive in their hometown.

RZEZNIA is a crust/grindcore band that has been active for a few years. They've released a full-length CD on Selfmadegod Records and one tape.

MASSKOTKI is an all female band into the melodic, catchy, poppy electro-punk thing with some personal, political and feminist lyrics. One of the members of the band, Katiusha, used to play in angrier sounding bands like PIEKLO KOBIET and SILIKONFEST. They've played several Ladyfests around Poland, Germany, and Austria. Their full-length CD called *Chodz zobaczyc* is on Emancypunx Records.

HUNDRED INCH SHADOW — Melodic hardcore with an old-school touch. Their full-length CD called *Rise And Fall* is out on Shing Records.

DIE LAST — Very rockish sounding emo hardcore but with good personal/political lyrics. Definitely not pretentious crap. Their full-length CD *Medecine* is out on Trujaca Fala...

SECOND CHANCE — This band is CRO-MAGS worship, so you know what to expect... Strongly NYHC influenced. One full-length CD *Long Distance Love* was released on Pasazer Records.

STREFA ZAGROZENIA — Traditional punk rock. They recently released a full-length CD *Nie Poddawaj Sie!* on Nikt Nic Nie Wie.

THE HUNKIES contains some members and ex-members of bands like ANALOGS and RANGERS. This band is more hardcore punk sounding than their previous bands. It's decent and good sounding straightforward HC/punk with the feel of some older Polish bands. They have two CDs out; the latest one is a split with EYE FOR AN EYE on Jimmy Jazz and Pasazer.

PROJEKT — One of the bands of the famous "Unity 2000" crew back then, who started with SCHIZMA or 1125. Heavy sounding NYHC stuff with some old-school HC and melodic HC influences. They recently released a full-length CD on Pazaser Records; one tape under their belt as well.

NOWY SWIAT is a band from Warszawa, and they're more connected with the Oi/street punk scene. They have one CD out Jimmy Jazz Records and benefit tape for local anarchist activities from a few years back.

P.D.S. — This band is from Legionowo, in the grey suburbs of Warszawa. They've been around for more than ten years but have never gained more than local interest. I'm sure they don't care at all. Just recently they released their first full-length CD on Jimmy Jazz Records. PDS plays traditional, melodic '70s punk in the vein of RAMONES and

some old Polish bands.

POKERFACE — Melodic rock 'n' roll punk stuff with one CD out on Shing Records.

FAUST AGAIN — Along with SUNRISE this is the leading Polish band in the metal/core/mosh genre. Heavy, massive sound with quite good lyrics. These hard-working guys have a full-length CD *Seizing Our Souls* out on Circulation from Germany. The same label is going to release their upcoming full-length album. If you're into this kind of stuff I can definitely recommend them.

ANGELREICH — Another metal hardcore outfit from the big wave of the mosh-core flooding Poland recently. They released a split CD with TORMENT OF PROMETHEUS on the German label FTL.

NO HEAVEN AWAITS US — Heavy mosh metal hardcore. Recently they're released their first full length CD called "Irony of pure hatred" on Lifeline Records.

SHACKLED DOWN is the only band around here playing faster, thrashier sounding hardcore. They mix it with some more melodic sounding HC punk and some old-school HC influences. Their CDEP *The Crew* is out on Shing Records and also on Selfmadegod Rec. Shackled Down contains members of PIGNATION.

OREIRO is a more "modern" sounding band, trying to mix emo/screamo hardcore with metalcore and punk. They're still far from all that karate-dancing mentality that has flooded scenes in recent years, and stick with DIY principals and honest attitudes. Lyrics from personal to social. Their debut CDEP is called *Heartfelt Words* on Nikt Nic Nie Wie/Trujaca Fala.

SATURNDAY plays emo-core/indie rock stuff, with a CDEP *Fragile Structures* on European Records.

BLOOD IS THE HARVEST — Tough, heavy hardcore in the vein of bands like BORN FROM PAIN and heavy European stuff. Their *Till The Bitter End* CDEP is out on Shing Records.

There's a few bands yet worth of mention. After the demise of the best old-school straightedge band from Poland, SECOND AGE (final 7" out on Commitment Records in Holland), a new band started, **X'S ALWAYS WIN**, including the bass player of the legendary CYMEON X and APATIA. Modern, good sounding old-school hardcore stuff, their debut is in the works. **PLEASE DIE** is another old-style straightedge band with a young lineup and influences from WIDE AWAKE and SIDE BY SIDE to modern old-school sounding stuff. Their four-song demo is out now. **CRUSH ALL FAKES** sounds like more traditional old-school hardcore and they're working on a debut CDEP. Some members of the band have a new straightedge hardcore band called **xINSURRECTIONx**. It's like old-school hardcore mixed with some new-school era stuff like UNBROKEN and OUTSPOKEN. There's also few interesting new hardcore bands in my hometown, like **LAST ITEM** (heavy old-school stuff in the vein of JUDGE and RIGHT BRIGADE—demo out and 7" soon on The Essence Records in the UK), **CZARZLY** (some old-school spirit with more emotive and straightforward sounds, demo out) and **PRESSURE RISING** (in the vein of Bad Brains and early Cro-Mags, demo out). There are two more very promising punk sounding bands in Warsaw: **EL BANDA** (female fronted, straightforward, melodic punk with ex-bass player of POST REGIMENT, so you know the deal) and **POGOTOWIE SEXUALNE** (almost all-female, straightforward punk with members of SILIKONFEST, JUNKIE TRAIN and MASSKOTKI).

Other bands in Poland worth mentioning are **EKSMISJA** (anarchist, activist hardcore/punk, connected with the "Krzyk" squat in Gliwice—great

INFEKCJA

looking CD-R out on In Our Hands), **SLOWA WE KRWI** (female fronted anarcho-crust/hc/punk from Bialystok, related to the defunct De-Centrum squat in Bialystok), and **ALIENACJA** (grinding metalcore, CD-R out, full-length CD in the works).

LABELS

Nikt Nic Nie Wie Records — Active since the very early '90s. They were one of the first DIY labels in Poland, releasing the first DIY HC/punk vinyl in this country. They have tons of stuff released, recent ones are CDs and LPs of ANTIDOTUM, ABBADON, WLOCHATY LP, 19 WIOSEN, and 7"s by OREIRO and OI POLLOI. Tons of other vinyl and CD are released as well, like INKWIZYCJA, HARUM SCARUM (US) live CD, POST REGIMENT, DEZERTER, SILNA WOLA, MASSKONTROLL (US), GUERNICA Y LUNO, AMEN, RESIST (US), SO MUCH HATE (Norway), APATIA, HERESY/MEATFLY split and much more on tapes (including CRASS, CRUCIFIX, SUBHUMANS, HIS HERIO IS GONE and plenty of others). Soon: INNER TERRESTRIALS CD, DEFORMED discography CD, SANCTUS IUDA discography double-CD and a posthumous HOMOMILITIA second LP! (info@nnnw.pl; www.nnnw.pl)

Trujaca Fala Records — One of the most active labels in Poland. They have a bunch of cool stuff like INFEKCJA, PESD, SIGNAL LOST 7", ANTICHRIST/INTENSITY 7", SILENCE 7", a new APATIA CD, ANTICHRIST CD, ANTICHRIST/DYSMORFOFOBIA 7", DISORDER 7", JUGGLING JUGULARS 12"/CD, SUICIDE BLITZ, INSUICIETY, BORN DEAD ICONS, SEGUE, SICK TERROR/CATHODE and more, also tons of tapes… (PO Box 13, 81-806 Sopot 6, Poland; fala@bg.univ.gda.pl)

Pasazer Records — One of the most active labels around. Mostly punk rock stuff released but some HC too, with CDs of bands like 1125, ALIANS, APRIL, BIALA GORACZKA and more. Out soon: POST REGIMENT both demos on CD, DEZERTER tribute double-CD comp.and more… They also do the biggest Polish HC/punk fanzine *Pasazer*—every issue comes with a compilation CD and tons of stuff inside. (PO Box 42, 39-201 Debica 3, Poland; pasazer@mtnet.com.pl; www.pasazer.pl)

Jimmy Jazz Records — Previously known as Rock'n'Roller Records. Focused on Oi, street punk, ska and rockabilly. There's tons of CD releases on this label including ANALOGS (Poland's most popular Oi band, active for over ten years), LOS FASTIDIOS (Italy), KARCER, THE HUNKIES, PDS, NOWY SWIAT and tons more…also interesting discographies of '80s Polish punk rock bands like SMIERC KLINICZNA and WC JIMMY JAZZ. They also publish one of Poland's older fanzines, *Garaz*, covering similar music. (PO Box 184, 71-507 Szczecin, Poland; jimmy-jazz@wp.pl; www.jimmyjazz.pl)

Shing Records — HC label mostly focused on metalcore and NYHC stuff. Lots of stuff released (CDs and vinyl) for Polish bands like COALITION, INFLEXIBLE, PIGNATION, SCHIZMA CD, SUNRISE AWAKE CD, INFLEXIBLE, and many tapes like KILL YOUR IDOLS, SEPARATION, FINAL EXIT and more… Out soon: FACE OF REALITY CD and 666 ANIOLOW CD.

(shing@shingrecords.com; www.shingrecords.com)

Refuse Records is my label and distro, still active and since 1993. Focused mostly on straightedge, hardcore and political punk bands, zines, literature, etc. There is tons of good international stuff so ask for a catalog. There is a bunch of stuff released on Refuse Records like HIT ME BACK LP/CD (co-released with 625 and Punx Before Profits), THE TANGLED LINES/DICK CHENEY 7" (Ger/Swe), NAMES FOR GRAVES 7" (US), NO VIOLENCE CDEP (Bra), JIHEART CDEP (Belarus), NEW WINDS CD (Portugal), I SHOT CYRUS CD (Bra), BETERCORE CD (Hol), TIME X 7" (Por), and Polish bands like ZLODZIEJE ROWEROW, SECOND AGE, REGRES, ONLY WAY OUT, JULIETTE, etc. and many tapes like VITAMIN X, HIGHSCORE, REACHING FORWARD, CHAMPION, and more… In the works: FPO CD (Macedonia), LET'S GROW 10"/CD (Serbia), REGRES CDEP, and more… Write for trades, wholesales or catalog, still looking for decent meaningful bands on upcoming releases.

(Robert, PO Box 7, 02-792 Warszawa 78, Poland; refusexresist@go2.pl; www.refuserecords.prv.pl)

Emancypunx Records — The only girl-only run label in Poland and probably one of the few in Europe. Started out of the most active and pioneering anarcho-feminist collective in Poland of the same name. Focused mostly on all-girl or female fronted hardcore punk bands from all over the world, anarcho-feminist stuff, girl zines, etc. Still DIY and kicking! Their recent releases are MAKILADORAS 12" (Holland), BEYOND PINK LP (Sweden), TRUST 7" (Argentina) and CDs of bands like JIHEART (Belarus), MASSKOTKI, DAISY CHAIN (Germany) and comps. like *The Sisterhood* 7" (with all-girl straightedge bands from USA, Brazil, Argentina, France, and Germany), *Noc Walpurgii 1996-2002* CD and *The Girls Can Dish It Out Too* CD, as well as tape releases (HARUM SCARUM, DISCARGA and more). They're also doing shows and festivals like Noc Walpurgii (Valpurgi's Night) and Ladyfest. (Jennifer Ramme, PO Box 145, 02-792 Warszawa 78, Poland; emancypunxrecords@go2.pl, www.emancypunx.com)

Enigmatic Records — Active for a long time. Various stuff from melodic punk to NYHC to metalcore. They have some CDs released like SKTC/7 GODZIN SNU, ZBEER, LIBERUM VETO, HEROINA, WLOCHATY 7", STUCK ON CEILING 7", ROTTWEILER 7", CYMEON X CD, and tons of tapes. (PO Box 40, 41-709 Ruda Slaska, Poland; enigmatic@go2.pl)

Self Made God Records — Active label focused mostly on grindcore stuff. They have a bunch of CD releases out for bands like AGATHOCLES (B), CATHETER (US), WOJCZECH (D), SEWN SHUT (S) THIRD DEGREE/HE WHO CORRUPTS 7", ANTIGAMA, THIRD DEGREE, and SHACKLED DOWN. They also put out the only English-language zine in Poland, *Violence*. (PO Box 46, 21-500 Biala Podlaska, Poland; karolsmg@go2.pl; www.smgrecords.prv.pl)

Pop Noise Records — Lately mostly focused on releasing Polish HC/punk legends and old bands. Which is not bad, if you ask me, since these recordings were hard to find. Out on Enigmatic: TZN XENNA CD, ABADDON CD (re-press of LP from '86 on New Wave Recs from Paris), RECTIFY CD, BRYGADA KRYZYS CD, *Porzucona Generacja* comp CD, and lots of tapes. (PO Box 9008, 90-964 Lodz 9, Poland)

Lou And Rocked Boys — Mostly Polish punk rock stuff, with CDs of bands like WLOCHATY, ABADDON, SEDES, and ZIELONE ZABKI… (www.rockers.serpent.pl)

Czerwony Diabelek Records — They're into crust, grind, fast stuff…with CDs of bands like DECREPIT (US), HE WHO CORRUPTS (US), and THIRD DEGREE, as well as 7" releases of PSYCHONEUROSIS and SEE YOU IN HELL/MINDLOCK (Czech), and some tapes (like SPAZZ, HOLIER THAN THOU and KUNGFU RICK). Out soon: PSYCHONEUROSIS CD and BOMBA W TORCIE CD. (Adam, Zapolskiej 23, 41-400 Myslowice, Poland; www.redevilrec.com)

Mami Records — Mostly melodic punk, some hardcore and reggae… A few CDs released of bands like UPSIDE DOWN, APATIA, AVOIDED (Sweden), AWAKE, SHITFACE, and some tapes as well. (PO Box 107, 63-100 Srem, Poland; info@mamirecords.com, www.mamirecords.pl)

Zima Records — Small label mostly into punk and reggae stuff. They've released CDs of bands like SMIERC KLINICZNA, MOSKWA, PROFANACJA, AGAINST ALL ODDS, as well as some tapes... (PO Box 2, 44-120 Pyskowice, Poland; zimaFFH@interia.pl)

Yama-Dori Records is a new label that started around two years ago in Lublin. Maciek is doing a good job keepin' the things alive in their hometown, after labels like Lagart left. Yama-Dori has some CD releases and co-releases for bands like SILENCE, MIND POLLUTION and JIHEART (Belarus), and some tapes (and CD-R releases) for bands like RAMBO, AMANDA WOODWARD, WITCH HUNT, ZEGOTA and others. (yama_dori@o2.pl)

Sadness Of Noise is another new label

from Lublin, started by Skubi, singer of SILENCE. There's a few interesting CDs on his label, like MADAME GERMEN (Spain), SILENCE, and MIND POLLUTION. (www.sadnessofnoise.end.pl; silence_sm@wp.pl)

Lifeline Records — This label is focused only on metal hardcore mosh bands. Released: NO HEAVEN AWAITS US CD; upcoming: SUNRISE CD, 13TH DRAFT CD, FALL BEHIND CD, and more… (lifeline@aster.pl)

Impeachment — Some co-releases out; a recent one is the SCHOLASTIC DETH CD with 625. Contact through PIGNATION and SHACKLED DOWN. (www.pignation.prv.pl)

Antiself is focused on grindcore stuff, with releases like ANTIGAMA 7", ANTIGAMA/BASTARD SAINST CDEP, and GROSSMEMBER/ NEUROPATHIA 7". (www.antiself.pl)

In Our Hands is a small new label focused on straightedge hardcore and HC punk stuff, like tapes of Italian sXe bands NO MORE FEAR, VALUES INTACT, as well as COME CLOSER (Ger), and an EXMISJA CD-R. (inourhands.prv.pl, stepniu@poczta.onet.pl)

Black Star — Some tape co-releases and a JIHEART CDEP out. (michalwolny@o2.pl)

FANZINES

There's plenty of fanzines in Poland. In the last 2–3 years there has been an explosion of new zines, most of them with a strong DIY spirit, with personal writings, political stuff, and music.

Anyway, there are very few English language magazines and zines: ***Violence*** is grind/metal/ hc magazine. Issue #7 isout now with tons of interviews like ANTIGAMA, DARKEST HOUR, INTEGRITY, NAPALM DEATH, SHACKLED DOWN, MONSTER, and many more (contact through Selfmadegod Records). ***Drop Out*** is a new fanzine covering powerviolence/thrash/crust/ grind. The first issue includes HELLNATION, CATHETER, DISKONTO, SHACKLED DOWN, and more, as well as some columns. (dropout@go2.pl). ***Chaos Grrrlz*** has four issues out, but only the latest one is in English. It's a fanzine dedicated to feminism, riot grrrl, hardcore, and straight edge, with lots of personal writing and articles on straightedge and feminism, including interviews with female fronted, old-school hardcore bands like THE TANGLED LINES, TRUST, and A REASON FOR LIVING. (bordi@go2.pl)

As I mentioned, there's plenty of zines around Poland in our native language. The biggest magazines are definitely ***Pasazer*** (HC/punk), ***Garaz*** (oi/street punk), and ***Arle-zine*** (punk). Every one of them prints a few thousand copies each, with color covers, and include CD compilations.

There are many smaller fanzines; some of my favourites are ***XsecondvisionX*** (sXe/old school/ thrash/politics), ***Krzyk To Za Malo*** (sXe, hardcore, art, politics), ***So Edge*** (vegan sXe), ***Follow That Sheep*** (sXe hardcore), ***Lechtaczka*** (lesbian queer punk), ***Garlic Thrasher*** (feminism and old-school/thrash hardcore), ***Awaiting the End*** (sXe/HC/punk), ***Left Your Mark*** (sXe), ***Nacht*** (anarcho HC punk), and some more… Right now, most zines are coming from the straightedge and feminist/riot grrrl scenes.

FESTIVALS/SHOWS

There are dozens of places and venues to play around Poland. If you're looking for some help, write to me and I can help with booking shows or just giving out some useful contacts. I've been involved in booking shows and tours for twelve years now, booking lots of bands during that time. In last year I've booked shows/tours for international bands like VITAMIN X, DEAD STOP, DOWN TO NOTHING, CHILDREN OF FALL, MONSTER, THE SHINING, THE TANGLED LINES, BORN/ DEAD, I SHOT CYRUS, DISCARGA, DICK CHENEY, HAVEHEART, NOTHING GOLD CAN STAY, SHUT THE FUCK UP, BURY THE LIVING… NEW WINDS are next in line.

I'm also involved in two bigger festivals: **Noc Walpurgii** (Valpurgi's Night) is a festival organized with Emancypunx Records and many participators. It's an anti-sexist/anti-homophobic festival with mostly all-girl or female-fronted bands, and also all kinds of hardcore and punk bands supporting ideas, performances, spoken word, drag queens, art, exhibitions, workshops, etc. Last time there were around 800 visitors with international bands like ACTIVE MINDS, BEYOND PINK, CINDER, DE FATWAS, VICIOUS IRENE and some Polish ones. On April 29–30, 2006 was the 10-year anniversary of the fest. This year's lineup was GREG BENNICK (USA, ex-TRIAL, workshop, spoken word, juggling), ABDUCTEE SD (Swe), AMANDA WOODWARD (Fra), THE TANGLED LINES (Ger), SHORT FUSE (Ger), ZLODZIEJE ROWEROW (Pol), DAISY CHAIN (Ger), EL BANDA (Pol), EKSMISJA (Pol), POGOTOWIE SEKSUALNE (Pol), and also some workshops, spoken word, movies and more! Check out www.myspace.com/nocwalpurgii

Another festival I'm involved is the **Open Air Hardcore Festival** in the summertime, with international hardcore acts and around 1200-1400 visitors. For details about both festivals write to the address below or visit www.refuserecords.prv.pl

There are also some other smaller events. Most of the squats are doing their ocassional anniversaries every year.

OTHERS

Sure we have some non-music political activities but I don't have enough time and energy to talk about it at the moment and yet I don't want to grab all the place in this fanzine. Anyway there are some organizations and collectives worthy of support, as well as some squats. I recommend checking out the recent issue of *Profane Existence* with a Polish scene report for more details. For those who are interested, I strongly recommend checking out *Abolishing the Borders from Below* magazine from Germany, focusing on the current political situation and activist and anarchist scenes in Eastern Europe. (www.abb.hardcore.lt)

Feel free to get in touch. If you need any addresses, just ask. Write for trades and wholesale, or to communicate and discuss politics or music. (I'm interested in current and '80s-'90s worldwide hardcore/punk.)

Thanx and keep the spirit of DIY hardcore punk. All hails to *MRR* for keepin' great work throughout the years and supporting international scenes.

Robert xxx (Refuse Records) February 2006

Refuse Records, c/o Robert Matusiak, PO Box 7, 02-792 Warszawa 78, Poland; refusexresist@go2.pl; www.refuserecords.prv.pl; www.myspace.com/refuserecords

REGRES

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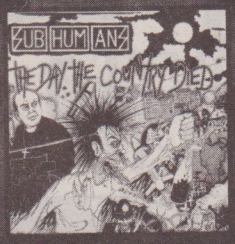

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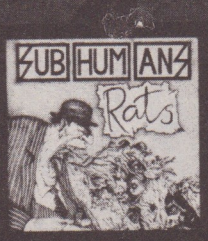

RATS

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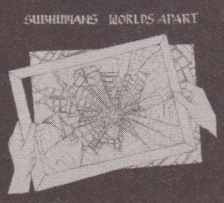

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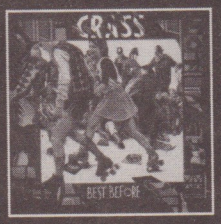

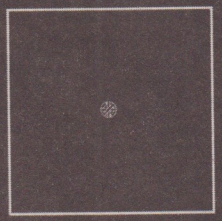

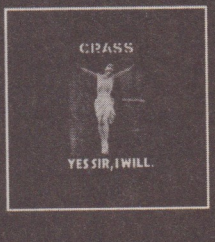

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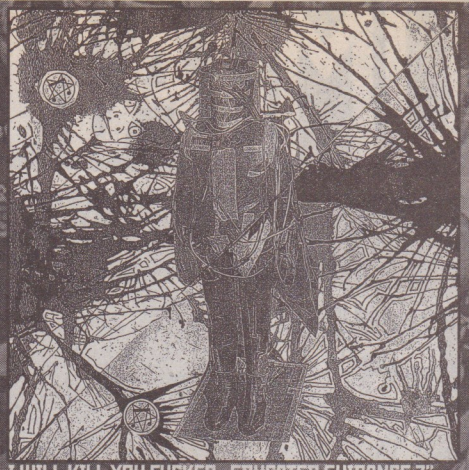
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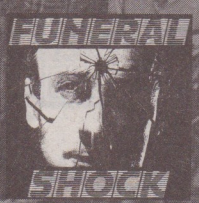

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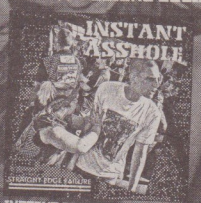

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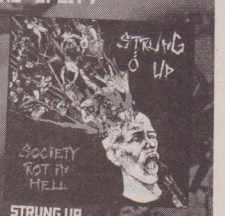

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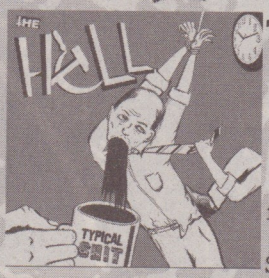

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BUSINESS-AND-PUNK ROCK (PART 2)

CONTRACT

In both this and last month's issues of *Maximumrocknroll* we asked a bunch of people involved in the "business" of punk rock all about ethics, independence, and where we draw the line in dealing with major corporations. We're proud to present a broader scope of represetatives this month: a collective (**Southkore Records**), a non-profit organization (***Razorcake*/Gorsky Press**), a great European fanzine (***TRUST***), two of the most well-respected independent distributors (**Sound Idea Distribution** and **Ebullition Distribution/*HeartattaCk* fanzine**), and, of course, punk record labels, from the very small (**Give Praise Records**) to the very biggest (**Fat Wreck Chords**).

Next month we will have more on this topic, including an interview with Ramsey Kanaan of **AK Press**, exploring the many grey areas involved in keeping your ethics while staying in business, on point, and, yes, punk!

BUSINESS AND PUNK ROCK (PART 2)

Fat Mike • Fat Wreck Chords

What are your core business ethics?
Treat everybody with absolute fairness. Bands, kids, distributors, employees, studios, artists, and stores should all be treated with respect. Nobody gets screwed ever. I would much rather lose money on a band than make money and have a band bummed out. Here's a few examples of things we do at Fat Wreck Chords that exemplify what our ethics are: All bands have final say on all matters of music and artwork and marketing. Bands are signed to contracts that are usually for one record and never in excess of two records. Some bands have never even signed contracts with us (Good Riddance, Hi-Standard, etc.). We profit share with all employees as well as give retirement contributions. Everyone at Fat has medical and dental insurance. We don't cross colateralize record royalties (kinda hard to explain, but we're one of the only labels that has this policy). We've never been involved on either side of a lawsuit. Every year we give thousands of dollars to charities such as Food Not Bombs and PETA. In 2004 we raised well over $500,000 for Punk Voter which was subsequently spent on a massive anti-Bush campaign. We've put out compilations for PETA and PROTECT. We have a no hip-hop music listening policy, and we have nap time.

> "Bands expect to get fucked on majors, but when it happens on an indie, it leaves more of a scar." - *Fat Mike / Fat Wreck Chords*

What does it mean to be independent? Why is it important to be independent?
It's important to be independent so that when making decisions, you make them based on your gut, your experience, your taste, your friendships and your relationships. When your label is owned or partly owned by a larger corporation, decisions are made with only profit in mind. That's always the bottom line with corporations. It ceases to be about music and art, or at the very least the music becomes secondary to the money.

What makes a punk business different than any other business?
Punk businesses don't own the streets, we run wild in them.

What is DIY?
I know people don't think of NOFX this way, but we are a pretty good example of a DIY band. Surprised? Shouldn't be. We put out our own records (or our friends have put them out), we own our own studio, we book our own tours (in North and South America anyway), we don't have management, and we used to make our own merch until our warehouse got flooded and we lost everything (now we work with CinderBlock). We make all our own decisions about everything. There is no other involvement. How could we be more DIY?

Is it wrong to buy or deal with major labels? What about labels that use major-owned (or partly major-owned) distributors like ADA, RED, Caroline, Fontana, etc?
If you want to get your records in a lot of stores you need some kind of major company distribution. There's no other way to get into the bigger chains. If there was a huge independent distributor that could pull it off, I would use them for sure. As of now, we use RED to get into chain stores but we also use Smash, Revolver, No Idea, Sound of California, and a few other indie distributors to get into the mom and pop stores. We also sell to about 250 stores directly. So I wouldn't say it's wrong to work with major companies, but it's nice to spread the wealth to the indie distributors too.

Is a punk band still punk if they sign to a major label? Is there ever a good excuse to sign to a major label?
It's the intention of the band that makes them punk. Not what label they're on. I know it's an old argument, but the Dickies and the Ramones were punk bands, just like Anti-Flag, Bad Religion, Chumbawamba, and Jawbreaker, and they all did stuff on major labels. I see a big fucking difference between those bands and Good Charlotte and Simple Plan, but maybe you don't. Is there a good excuse to sign to a major? Sure...money.

Is an indie label that acts like a major just as bad as a major? Why or why not? Is the major vs. indie debate moot?
An indie that acts like a major is probably worse than a major because bands sign or stay with indies so they can be treated like people as opposed to being treated like a product. I've heard far more horror stories from bands on indies than ones on majors. Bands expect to get fucked on majors, but when it happens on an indie, it leaves more of a scar.

Is it okay to trade/download MP3s of independent/DIY punk bands without paying?
It's like sneaking into a show. Sure it's OK for 10 people to sneak into a show with 500 people there, but when 300 people sneak into a show with 500 people there, it's not so OK. Shit, I used to tape shitloads of records, but I also bought a shitload. I think there just needs to be some give and take. If everyone downloaded everything for free, bands and labels would be pretty fucked. Maybe that's an OK thing though.

Is it okay to make a living off of punk rock?
Fuck yeah. I can say that too, because for the first eight years I was in NOFX I wasn't making a living. We toured and recorded throughout the '80s without even a hope of making a living. We did it for the fun and the booze, and I can honestly say that making money playing punk is funner than not making money playing punk. The problem occurs when bands start with the idea of making money first. That's when things start to get sucky. It's not making the money, it's doing it *for* the money. When making money is the bi-product of being in a punk band, it just makes it sweeter.

Fat Wreck Chords / PO Box 193690 / San Francisco, CA 94119 / www.fatwreck.com

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Lisa • *HeartattaCk* magazine/ Ebullition distribution

What are your core business ethics?
HeartattaCk works on the core principles of DIY and DIT. We are DIY in as much as everything we can do is done in-house by people who want to be able to control their own media. DIT (Do It Together) because it has always been the collaboration of the whole scene contributing to the content and ideas we featured. No matter who was at the helm, *HaC* has been a collective piece of media for the DIY community. We are not beholden to larger interests or big companies. In fact, we have done everything in out power to resist the corporatization of punk and support the underground. In its twelve years has stayed hardcore for the hardcore—something I'm proud of.

Ebullition works in a similar DIY fashion, with local control and ethical business being some of the main goals. It has always been by the kids and for the kids—even though we really aren't kids anymore. I like the fact that I get to work for the strength of the scene at my job. That my effort and work pays off in a stronger community.

What does it mean to be independent?
In my book, independent means having local control over what you do, existing outside the corporate structure, and striving to be an alternative to regular means of doing things. Be that releasing records, making art, selling food, or providing services. Independent means are the human side, the personal side, of the capitalist society we live in. Those working collectively, as co-operatives, or as mom and pops stand as role models for people looking to infuse meaning and humanity into a cold system.

HeartattaCk has kept itself out of the pockets of corporate rock, which gives us the freedom to say what we want. It also gives us a good amount of integrity. We'll print bad reviews (hell, even for Ebullition records) and we'll talk a little shit because we don't have to worry about what sells. Independent media, punk media especially, are free to print what they think is important or interesting and not what serves someone else's bottom line.

Why is it important to be independent?
Being independent is crucial. Especially in the current climate of corporate control. It allows you control your own fate, for better or worse, and provide an alternative to what is being fed us. The small amount of independent businesses in the world that can continue to thrive in the current marketplace are the last bastion of consumer freedom we have in this country. Your local food co-op, record store, coffee shop, or bookstore are the few things standing in the way of a land ruled solely by corporations at the expense of people. Seriously, some of the few things keeping us from a bleak, science fiction type future.

> "The 'independent' distros (like Lumberjack-Mordam) are sneaky bastards. They don't tell you that their money comes from places like Warner because they want to maintain their dignity. But, really, they are just trying to farm the next big thing and gain a greater market share."
>
> - *Lisa / HeartattaCk, Ebullition*

What makes a punk business different than any other business?
A punk business is only as different from regular business as the punks themselves are. I can agree with other like-minded individuals as to what that means, maybe. Ebullition has a few peers in the DIY distribution game, but most of the distros from the '90s have gone out of business while so-called independents are growing. I think there are very few DIY punk businesses left right now. Hopefully that is because a new crop of them is just starting off.

Can we agree on what the ethics of punk business are?
The ethics of punk business are impossible to agree on. Personally, I think it has a lot to do with whom you are serving with your business. If you create an equal exchange of goods and/or services for the people who buy things from you, then you are being fair. To me, fairness plays a big role in punk business ethics. Everyone wants to feel like they are getting what they need, and if you can do that you have achieved a lot. Both Ebullition and *HeartattaCk* have tried to keep costs down to make things accessible for most people. Fair prices are a big part of punk business. Another thing I think is important is good service. Not ass-kissing services, but people who take enough pride in what they are doing to do a good job. Sloppiness has a place in punk but I think we owe it to each other to do the best for each other we can, in relationships and in business.

What is DIY?
That is a hard one. DIY at this point has been extended to so many things, that it has lost clarity. DIY is an ethic that pushes you to do what you can with your own resources and encourages you to work with others to make things work. You don't have to do every single part of a project by yourself, but you do need to keep it out of the hands of bigger business and keep it within your own community to maintain the integrity and strength that DIY has.

Is it wrong to buy or deal with major labels? What about labels that use major-owned distributors like ADA, RED, Caroline, and Fontana?
People can buy whatever they want. Right and wrong are subjective absolutes. If you want independents to thrive, then clearly supporting entities whose interests and goals are opposite is bad. We all only have a certain amount of money and you have to decide what you want your dollar to support. Every dollar spent at the Virgin Megastore or Costco is a dollar lost at Eastside Records and the IV Food Co-op. Those kinds of choices, though small, are pretty important. If you care about the issue of independents versus majors, I think you should always support the independent.

The "independent" distros (like Lumberjack-Mordam) are sneaky bastards. They don't tell you that their money comes from places like Warner because they want to maintain their dignity. But, really, they are just trying to farm the next big thing and gain a greater market share. First, people need to be educated about the kinds of businesses that are out there and then punks need to tell those places that we don't want them putting us out of business.

Is a punk band still punk if they sign to a major label? Is there ever a good excuse to sign to a major label?
How can a punk band be an example if they get in bed with corporations? That band might rock, but they aren't any kind of alternative. I think most bands fail to be the stepping stone into radical politics they pretend to be when claiming to "get their message to the masses." There hasn't been an example yet of a band that has overcome that.

Is the major vs. indie debate moot?
I don't think the indie versus major debate is moot, but I do think we have to extend it to all areas of independent/local business versus corporations.

What can we do to take punk out of the hands of big business? Should we even worry about big business?
We should be worried about the steamrolling of small business and local control by corporations. We should be very, very worried. The future is bleak. If we want to turn things around we have to vote with our dollars every day. We have to support all the alternatives to corporate control we can. You have to get into the system and change it by supporting ethical business so that positive can remain.

Should we be just as adamant about remaining "independent" in areas of our lives outside of punk rock?
Fuck yes! Punk rock is only the tip of the iceberg. Join a food co-op, buy organic, refuse products made in sweatshop, purchase renewable resources, or anything aligned with your ethics.

Is it wrong to buy/sell bootlegs?
Bootleggers are scumbags! I joke about that all the time, but really bootlegs are fine. If you are making something that cheats someone else then that sucks. But if people want to hear music or have shirts from people who can't be bothered to make them anymore then how can you blame them. Punks are fans. They want to have the Infest shirt and listen to a Los Crudos discography. But the people in charge of making those things don't want to keep them around—which just means that other people will. If there is a demand, some kid in her/his bedroom will fill it. Personally, I think bootleggers should always send the band and label some of the bootlegs or some compensation. You don't have to out yourself, but if you sent them a note saying you love the band and you wanted to share it with others they might actually be cool with it. Hell, of anything a bootleg makes your band even cooler and more exciting!

Is it okay to trade/download MP3s of independent/DIY punk bands without paying?
People have expenses. If you want everything to keep working, you have to find a way to repay people so they can keep doing what they are doing. It is all about being fair to others.

Is it okay to make a living off of punk rock?
Yes! As long as you are being fair and doing the work. As an Ebullition employee, I make a good living off punk rock. But, I've been doing it a long time, I work really fucking hard, and I am worth what I make. In my book, it is always fine to make a living off of something you spend your life doing, that you work hard at, and that you are committed to. Ebullition has been a successful and sustainable business that has employed Kent, countless helpers, and myself over the years. I have to no guilt for making money off it because Ebullition is incredibly fair to the people it deals with. We do a quality job and we deserve to be compensated. No one sits around on her or his ass or just talks on the phone all day. We work. And I have no qualms for being paid for work.

Ebullition / PO Box 680 / Goleta, CA 93116 / www.ebullition.com

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Bob Suren • Sound Idea Distribution

What are your core business ethics?
My main philosophy is to sell items that are truly from the punk/underground music scene. The most mainstream labels I sell are Fat Wreck Chords and Epitaph. I don't really like carrying those labels or any of the bands on them, but there is some demand for them, so I grudgingly stock them. But I gotta admit that Fat Wreck is pretty cool to deal with and in most cases their prices are lower than Havoc, Profane Existence, Deranged, Youth Attack, and 625, if you can believe that. That's about as far as I'll bend. I won't carry Sum 41, Blink 182, Good Charlotte or other shopping mall punk. I also refuse to carry metal, even though it is popular these days. I got into punk to avoid metalheads, not to rub elbows with them. I like to keep domestic 7"s at $3.50 and domestic LPs at $8.50, but lately a lot of domestic labels have been charging $2.50 plus shipping for 7"s and $6 plus shipping for LPs—*that's wholesale*. The new accepted DIY wholesale prices don't leave a lot of mark up for distributors and stores. I have been turning down a lot of otherwise good new titles lately strictly because the prices are too high. But if the high wholesale price trend continues, which I am sure it will, I will probably have to up my price cap, which I am not happy about. I have been running a label since 1991 and still have the same wholesale prices as the day I started. My 7"s are $1.80 and my LP and CDs are $4—and I don't charge for domestic shipping.

> "I make a lot of mix tapes and burned CDs and give them to kids who ask me for crap like Good Charlotte. I tell them, 'No, don't listen to Good Charlotte. Listen to Void, listen to Career Suicide. Take this and check it out.' Maybe one out of fifty gets it. The others don't care. You try to *give* them good music and they still want their MTV."
> *- Bob Suren / Sound Idea Distribution*

What makes a punk business different than any other business?
Probably lower acceptable profit margins, although that is changing. My best year of business had an 18% profit margin. My worst year of business had a 6% profit margin. My current profit margin is around 14%. That means that I have to sell $100 worth of stuff to put $14 in my pocket. Any mainstream business operating on that margin would probably call it quits.

Is a punk band still punk if they sign to a major label?
No. No major label is going to sign a real punk band. If you're cute enough and your music is wimpy enough to get on a major label, you were never punk to start with. Major labels have no interest in real punk bands like Out Cold and Caustic Christ. How would they mass market a band named Caustic Christ? Soccer moms all over the world would be outraged.

Is an indie label that acts like a major just as bad as a major? Why or why not? Is the major vs. indie debate moot?
Man, I can think of a few indie labels that want to be mainstream pretty bad. They are hiring publicity agents and "servicing" radio stations, trying like hell to get their bands on the Warped Tour. I recall one so-called DIY label that I was dealing directly with for several years. After Green Day/Rancid exploded, they stopped selling direct and went with a major distributor. I was told that the sales staff was being retrained to do radio publicity and to produce music videos for their bands. Music videos? This was around 1996; the label signed a two-year deal with either Dutch East India or Caroline, I can't remember which. For those two years, the label and distributor kept calling me to see if I wanted to buy any of their titles and I always said no. Well, two years passed and the major distributor did not make the label rich and famous and they called me back to say, "Hey, remember us? We're dealing direct again!" I guess the music video thing never took off for them.

What can we do to take punk out of the hands of big business? Should we even worry about big business?
I hate to admit it, but the food court punks are unstoppable. There are too many of them. The labels they like have too much money to fight. It is David vs. Goliath. But I still try. I make a lot of mix tapes and burned CDs and give them to kids who ask me for crap like Good Charlotte. I tell them, "No, don't listen to Good Charlotte. Listen to Void, listen to Career Suicide. Take this and check it out." Maybe one out of fifty gets it. The others don't care. You try to *give* them good music and they still want their MTV. I still think there is real punk music being made and I still think there are real punks out there. The real punks will eventually find the real punk music. You can help them find the way by copying music, passing out flyers, writing for zines, doing a radio show.

Is it wrong to buy/sell bootlegs?
I don't sell nearly as many bootlegs as I used to for a couple of reasons. Number one, the prices of bootlegs have gotten insane. A European bootlegger sent me a list of a bunch of cool bootlegs LPs but the wholesale prices are $12 to $16 each plus shipping from Europe. Fuck that. That's just greedy. It costs two or three bucks to make an album. Number two, quality of bootlegs is way down. No effort is going into packaging in many cases. Number three, a lot of the stuff being bootlegged on vinyl is either legitimately available on CD, such as the recent X, Fear, and Germs bootlegs, or the bands are reachable. In many cases, permission can be granted. Why do a bootleg when you can do a legit reissue? Because bootlegs sell for a lot more and people are willing to pay it. I do carry bootlegs if they are reasonably priced, look and sound good, and aren't stepping on anyone's toes, so to speak.

Is it okay to trade/download MP3s of independent punk bands without paying?
I have never downloaded anything, but I think downloading is a cool way to sample something. If you like what you hear, be cool and buy the record. I know several "punks" who say, "I haven't bought and album in years." That does not help out the bands, the labels, the distributors or the stores. If you *like* the band, why not buy the record?

Why don't punks have a problem with (Fox/Rupert Murdoch's) MySpace.com? Is there an alternative?
I am on MySpace but don't like it very much. I'm probably going to quit it soon. Rupert Murdoch owns Fox, too, but I still watch *The Simpsons* and *Family Guy*, so where do you draw the line? I'm going to quit MySpace because it's a bunch of silly gossip and name calling, not because of the Murdoch connection.

Is it okay to make a living off of punk rock?
I hope so! Punk rock has been my only source of income for 13 years. I work about 360 days a year, 10 to 14 hours a day. I rarely take time off, even when I'm sick. After all of the business expenses are paid, the leftover cash goes in my pocket. It's a living. It's not a great living, but it's a living and I'm my own boss and I like the work. I was talking to a guy yesterday who is about my age. He's a mortgage broker. He makes more in a month than I make in a year...no kidding. But he says he hates the job. Making a living doing what you like is cool.

Sound Idea Distribution / PO Box 3204 / Brandon, FL 33509-3204 / www.soundideadistribution.com

"We are independent with our music because it is one of the few things we can fully control in this world. It serves as a foundation for how we interact with each other in taking control of things within our community and hopefully can give a model or inspiration to others to do the same."
- Chris / Southkore Records

Chris • Southkore Records

We're just a small collectve so we dont really have any defined positions or roles. I ran these answers past everybody in the group and they seem to be pretty representative of our ideas as a group.

What are your core business ethics?
Our primary core ethic is that we are collective. We are members of our community. This includes both the international punk community and our local communities that we live in and interact with every day.

What does it mean to be independent? Why is it important to be independent?
We are independent with our music because it is one of the few things we can fully control in this world. It serves as a foundation for how we interact with each other in taking control of things within our community and hopefully can give a model or inspiration to others to do the same.

What makes a punk business different than any other business?
By proclaiming to be "punk" I think that carries with it a few core values, such as independence and honesty. There are a bunch of subtler points that we can argue about endlessly but I think to say "punk is whatever you want it to mean" is a copout.

What is DIY?
As part of a collective, the narrow definition of DIY is actually kind of limiting to us. It allows for a lot of egotist, self-centered things to be done in the name of fierce individualism. Our label *has* to be a collective because without our community we are nothing.

I think the ethics of DIY should always change and the bar should continue to be set higher and higher. Why pat ourselves on the back for repeating something that's been done before? Why not struggle to accomplish something new?

Is an indie label that acts like a major just as bad as a major? Why or why not? Is the major vs. indie debate moot?
Yes. This is actually what we struggle with the most. It hurts to see a community turn into a scene. We try to stay away from the music business, to create a safe space without all the power struggles, ego trips, profiteering, manipulation, etc. When that starts to happen in your local scene it can be quite disheartening.

What can we do to take punk out of the hands of big business? Should we even worry about big business?
Big business doesn't have much effect on what we're doing in the punk scene. I don't think there are a lot of A & R guys who will come to a backyard party in La Villita to check out bands who are not even close to marketable for a mainstream audience.

Is it okay to trade/download MP3s of independent/DIY punk bands without paying?
This is a tough question. Music is art and music should be free whenever possible, but on the other hand it costs $$$ to produce. Hopefully, more discussion can be done in the punk scene on how to do things collectively which can alter the way costs are distributed amongst all the ways money is generated. Fortunately, records are still bought by the vinyl nerds (myself included), but as the economy changes I wouldn't like music making to become a priviledge again only for those who can afford the equipment. The common argument is that this is a myth because the majors are getting hit more than the independents, but the reality is some scenes are poorer than others. Some distributors and labels have seen a loss in sales. If the punk economy gets affected by this, it will always be the poorest who get hit the worst.

Is it okay to make a living off of punk rock?
If you're doing it ethically. Once again, though, is it acceptable to do what's been done before or should you struggle to push the boundaries? I'd like to see more collective projects become sustainable.

Southkore Records / 2814 S. Spaulding / Chicago, IL 60623 / www.southkorerecords.com

RAZORCAKE — Todd Taylor • Co-president *Razorcake* magazine/Gorsky Press, Inc., a non-profit

What are your core business ethics?
Be fair and don't go out of business being fair. That, and try not to be a dick. Other than that: good prices on quality services. (Being a non-profit, making a zine , making books, distro-ing other folks' records, zines, and books.)

What does it mean to be independent? Why is it important to be independent?
Independent means being beholden to no one else, financially. No matter what people claim, they're always going to soften if their bread's buttered completely—or significantly—from other sources that can tell them what to do. Independent means knowing that you're the one you're going to have to ultimately rely on, financially. That if someone you deal with pulls the plug, you can still continue. That's the business side of it.

What makes a punk business different than any other business?
It deals with punk rock (vs. knitting or golf)? Be wary of people who wave the punk flag too hard as an excuse for not getting something done. Punks With Presses fucked a lot of people over. Rotz Records, the same. Independent Press Association, who we dealt with via Big Top Distribution, has been extremely negligent to us even though we had an exclusive contract with them.

All waved the flag of punk or progressive politics. On the converse, if someone I know runs a punk business and runs it well, and has fair prices, hell yeah we'll use them; strengthen our alliances.

What is the definition of DIY?

I like Do It Together better, but it's not as catchy an acronym. DIT.

Is a punk band still punk if they sign to a major label? Is there ever a good excuse to sign to a major label?

Are we talking today? Because I consider the Dead Boys, Buzzcocks, Saints, Pogues, Ramones, and Clash punk, and they're all on majors.

Let me first state this: I help run a non-profit whose stated purpose is to help preserve and spread independent music. By the nature of our Articles of Incorporation, we cannot and will not accept any major label financing. (Plus, we just don't want to.) This isn't an apology for the bands that sign to majors, but, shit, there are a lot of lousy indies out there who screw bands over (Hüsker Dü's finally getting paid by SST, twenty years after the fact). It's ultimately a personal decision for the bands, and the track record for their success isn't that good: maybe five percent make it. My suggestion is that they have someone on their side who can decipher a 300-page contract so they don't get fucked. Hey, it worked for All. They made the Blasting Room with their advance money and reinvested in DIY punk rock. There are wrinkles, but most bands will be flattened. Be careful.

Is an indie label that acts like a major just as bad as a major?

I think indies that act like majors are worse. They play both sides of the fence, using your back for "street cred." Like, Drive-Thru boasted, "We're indie!" while having a major's logo on their bands' press photos. Most of the time they're just looking for discounts. Here are some tip-off clues: If they do not list an address, only a website, on the music and in their ads, chances are they have major ties. If they have an assy street team. If they wildly change their musical focus (look at Vagrant, Lookout). If they sponsor a tour with a soda pop company or a department store. If they bully for very specific ad placement in your zine. If they're internalizing all the worse trappings of majors, the only difference is that they haven't signed a "better" distribution deal. Boo to them.

> "Complaining's real fuckin' easy. Making a solution, well, that's a lot of hard work and that's not so sexy." - *Todd / Razorcake, Gorsky Press*

Is the major vs. indie debate moot?

No. I'll go out of my way to support indie bands I love. I did it for five years at *Flipside*. I've done it for five years so far at *Razorcake*. If we don't preserve and protect this culture, you'll have some douchebag from *Spin* coming along and getting it all wrong.

What is your policy on ads/reviews from labels and that have major-label ties? (e.g., an indie release from a band on a major, labels that have exclusive distro through the majors, labels that do co-releases with majors [like Hopeless], etc.)

So far, we haven't run into it. We don't have many ties to any of the bigger indies (like Revelation). Here's where it gets super tricky and becomes, for us, a one-by-one consideration…here's the hypothetical: Say Against Me! (who I know on a personal level and really like, both as dudes and musicians) offers No Idea or Fat (who I also know on a personal level as people and as ethical labels) the vinyl of their next record. Will I accept the ad for the vinyl? Yes. Because in this very rarified consideration my personal interaction, admiration of both the art (of the band) and the business (of the indie labels) trumps Against Me! being on a major. I know the indies will benefit from it. I also know that they're in no way, shape, or form gearing themselves to be a major label. Those labels have had ample chances to "sell out," and time and time again they "buy in." We wouldn't, however, run the ad from the major. Major labels have so many magazines in their pockets. I don't want to be in league with that.

Here is the real complex thing, and it's an open-ended question: What about distribution? Indie, nationwide distribution has rolled over time and time again. (It has for zines: Fine Print went busto. So did Desert Moon.) And then it becomes a question of percentages and intent. Does a record company have an exclusive with WEA or do they just use major distro as part of a larger program, making sure mom and pops get the records, but also getting into larger stores? Does the indie label control its own destiny as best as it can? Again, there isn't a cut and dry answer. It's a case-by-case basis, one that we take seriously.

Also, we'll review the record on a major. It's about 1% of our record reviews by bands that a lot of punk fans like. I don't think we're running the risk of being toppled to the majors.

What can we do to take punk out of the hands of big business?

Huh? I can't do any of that. I can't force anyone to do anything. All I can do is make what we're doing as well-run, intelligent, and informative as possible. People have got to make their own decisions. All I want to be is a viable alternative to what's out there on a big scale.

Should we even worry about big business?

Yes, you should worry about big business because big business is in the business of shutting down small businesses.

Should we be just as adamant about remaining independent in areas of our lives outside of punk rock?

Do you have phone service? Do you have electricity? Do you have running water? Are any of these run, owned, and operated by punks?

I can't be adamant about being independent in every aspect of my life, but I do think that you can make decisions (dietary, entertainment, essentials that can be made and consumed ethically) that steer me more on that course. Sure.

Is it wrong to buy/sell bootlegs?

Depends. Say a major put out a record, like Leatherface's *Mush*, right? And the major wants $5,000 for the licensing. Find the band, ask them, tell them what you want to do, get their approval, do what you say you're going to do, and keep the label out of it. Bingo. A good bootleg. I also think the world's a better place because that Screamers double-CD bootleg was released with Tomata's approval, right before he died.

Is it okay to trade/download MP3s of independent/DIY punk bands without paying?

One can always ask the artist if they mind. Punks don't live in that big of a world. I've made scads of burns. Many times, those burns result in new fans of the band, who go to their shows, buy their T-shirts, and buy their records. It's a toughie, though. Also, DIY bands, if they're peeved about not being paid, should set up their own MP3 server and take control of what they think is being stolen from them. Complaining's real fuckin' easy. Making a solution, well, that's a lot of hard work and that's not so sexy.

Is it okay to make a living off of punk rock?

Absolutely. Everyday, I work my ass off so I don't have to give my time, energy, and money to someone I don't like doing a job I don't care for. Everyday, I reinvest myself in this. The pay's shit, but I love it. If I had to take a full time job, Razorcake would suffer. I'm making a living with punk rock, in a fair and reasonable exchange.

It's a give and a take. I didn't take this job from anyone... I made it for myself with the help of a lot of friends.

Razorcake/Gorsky Press, Inc. / PO Box 42129 / LA, CA 90042 / www.razorcake.com • www.gorskypress.com

TRUST — Dolf Hermannstädter *Trust* Fanzine (Germany)

What are your core business ethics?
Do what we want, not get trapped in "if you do this, then we pay you that," being honest, fair, not owe people money.

What does it mean to be independent? Why is it important to be independent?
The word itself with its meaning is totally overrated. Independent can mean something really cool, that you have the choice to make your own decisions and you are not necessarily a part of a certain part of the system. Or it just can be a regular business, operated independently to make as much money as possible and fuck people over. It also is a lie, since we are all not independent, we need to use "mainstream" stuff, we depend on money (no matter where it comes from: punk work, non-punk work, government, parents, inheritance).

What makes a punk business different than any other business? Can we agree on what the ethics of punk business are?
The ethics of a punk business need to be: "punk first, business second." Unfortunately, nowadays most punk businesses are business punk—their first concern is making money. It seems that in this new economy, punks and hardcore musicians don't do what they do because it is an urge, a passion, or a way to criticize the society or other wrongs. I have the feeling they would not do it if there weren't the possibility of making money. Fine, we all need to make money, but in a punk context, looking at the history, it is just *not* punk if you do something mainly because you make a living doing it. In other words, most people nowadays have the wrong motivation (money) for doing something that should be driven by spirit. Punk business could be different than other businesses; unfortunately most are not.

What is DIY?
Do It Yourself—also super overrated. It made total sense many years ago when you would do your own flyers rather then give them to a graphic designer. Learn your instruments by yourself instead with a teacher, etc. I think it is good to do things by yourself, but it is also good to have other people do things that make life easier... I think it works okay as a term to describe a certain scene or attitude, but if you decide to be a successful businessperson and do it all by yourself—fuck that.

Is it wrong to buy or deal with major labels?
It depends. If you are band and sign to a major label, be sure to get a really good deal! If you come from a punk/hardcore background (not just looking punk, but with its ideals and counterculture ideas) you cannot be on a major—well, you can, but then you lost what integrity you had. You can still be a good band, play great music and hopefully do what you want, but you have to keep in mind that now all you do is work for a company; the main aim of majors is to generate money. It is just another job. Period.

If you can avoid buying major products (not just music), that is great. But sometimes you cannot avoid it.

What about labels that use major-owned distributors like ADA, RED, Caroline, and Fontana?
Using distros that are linked to majors can be okay if you just use them to get your stuff out there. Labels that pretend to be independent but are backed up by a major should be treated like major labels. We do run ads of majors in *Trust*; they pay way more then punk businesses and we don't do anything in trade (interviews, etc.).

Is a punk band still punk if they sign to a major label? Is there ever a good excuse to sign to a major label?
No. A good excuse is if you've decided to flush down your reputation as a punk band, or if they pay you a lot of money. It is a bad excuse as well, since money should not buy your integrity... Then again, try and pay your landlord with a good portion of integrity.

I think if a band is "just a band" anyway and deal with business minded people in the first place, then it does not really matter.

Is an indie label that acts like a major just as bad as a major? Why or why not? Is the major vs. indie debate moot?
Yes, they are as bad. Fuck that, they have the wrong ambition to put out music, their motivation is to make money.

What is your policy on ads/reviews from labels and that have major-label ties? (e.g., an indie release from a band on a major, labels that have exclusive distro through the majors, labels that do co-releases with majors, etc.)
We review what we like, no matter what label it is on. All labels can advertise with us, we have different prices for majors. We don't do any "if you do a interview, we run a ad" trades, no matter if it is a major or a smaller label.

> "I don't listen to music via the Internet. I think soon people will not understand the value of music or a movie, since all it is to them is just a bunch of data... Will this lead to an end of the culture as we know it, or just be another change (for better or worse)? We will have to wait and see."
>
> *- Dolf Hermannstädter / Trust Fanzine*

What can we do to take punk out of the hands of big business?
If I had an answer to that question, I would have done it already. But I think it is too late now. Punk—well, its outer shell with none of the contents—has arrived in mainstream culture. There are too many different people involved for different (many times, wrong) reasons.

Should we even worry about big business?
Yes, punk needs to worry about big business, since if nobody worries it will all die, or just be another fashion lifestyle with no meaning.

Should we be just as adamant about remaining "independent" in areas of our lives outside of punk rock?
Yes, if you can afford to do that, absolutely. To me it makes total sense. I understand there are people that have to life a double life, working a regular job, understanding it sucks, but having a punk attitude. That is hard enough. If you have "one life," it is great, if you can live up to it. You can get trapped if you make a living doing what you do and depending on it. You should not make changes just to keep the money coming in. Well, you can, but then you loose on what was the original idea of doing what you do.

Is it wrong to buy/sell bootlegs?
If you make them because you are a fan of a certain band, and just do enough to make your money back, go ahead (just make sure you send the band a bunch). If you start to make money, fuck off. You should be hanged for doing bootlegs to make money and fucking the band over. The same goes for people who buy and sell bootlegs for insane prices in order to make money.

Is it okay to trade/download MP3s of independent/DIY punk bands without paying?
I don't listen to music via the Internet. I think soon people will

not understand the value of music or a movie, since all it is to them is just a bunch of data… Will this lead to an end of the culture as we know it, or just be another change (for better or worse)? We will have to wait and see.

Is it okay to make a living off of punk rock?
Yes, if you can run a punk business and not turn into a business punk. If your decisions are based on money, it is not OK; you should fuck off. It is all a question of people's motivation—it is that easy.

TRUST / Postfach 11 07 62 / 28087 Bremen / Germany / www.trust-zine.de

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Paul Sunderland Give Praise Records

What are your core business ethics?
I really only put out music I enjoy listening to myself... That is really my main core ethic. I go into most of my projects knowing that I won't make a ton back but if I really like the band, then I will put everything into it. Also, the band itself really has to be a hard working band. I like to see the band put a lot of effort into the recording and the sound, so it's like we are working together. Also, I aim to get bands from all over the place to put out, a lot of kids overlook the bands that are so far off. But really, I will work with a band if I like the sound and the band appears to be a hard working band.

What does it mean to be independent? Why is it important to be independent?
To be independent is to try to do everything by yourself to a point. Most people can't press their own records or duplicate their own CDs, so we go to plants and other companies to do that. Being independent is doing as much as you can by yourself, from the art layout/direction, to the promotion, to the distribution, to spending a whole weekend, screening special limited covers and stuffing records. I think it is very important to be independent, that in the end will make your label different then somebody else... your own personal touches, to the record and the promotion aspects.

> "Big business is pretty much looming over everything. The best I think we can do is not work with them. If enough punk-run businesses start up and continue to grow and co-operate with each other, we'll be set!"
> - *Paul Sunderland / Give Praise Records*

What makes a punk business different than any other business?
This goes back to being independent, a "punk" business is one that you can do by yourself, you oversee all of the work, as you try and struggle to keep your head up, and work your day job. Being involved in a punk business means that everything you put out/produce will not be huge money makers, you just enjoy doing it, so you do it. Money isn't the main concern, but enjoying your time is.

Can we agree on what the ethics of punk business are?
One ethic that I think we can all agree on is that we are in this for the enjoyment of actually doing something. Other than that it really branches off and is left up to the individual who is running the business.

Is "doing it yourself" only for those who can afford it? (i.e., What if you can't afford to buy your own tour van, have your band recorded, release your own records, etc.?)
"Doing it yourself" is for everyone... I think but for certain parts of the phrase you need to have a good income or good source of capital to back up your releases, tour van, recordings, etc. Although there are so many ways you can contribute on a whole other scale such as making a zine, which is very inexpensive. So DIY (I would like to think) is for everyone.

Is it wrong to buy or deal with major labels? What about labels that use major-owned distributors like ADA, RED, Caroline, and Fontana?
No, I don't think so. If you keep with your own business/punk ethics then I don't see a problem with that. It ends up helping you in the long run, if these distributors want to pick up a few of your records, it can just help to get more unknown bands heard! I don't necessarily agree going solely with these distributors as their end costs seem to be more, and you are missing the trading/show distribution aspect.

Is a punk band still punk if they sign to a major label?
No. Signing to a major label is a cut-off point from dealing with all of the other punk and diy run business's. When you sign to a major label you can sell your CDs for 12–13 bucks, you can charge mega amounts of money at the door...money that the punks can't just lay down, so in a sense you are not supporting the "punk" community at all.

What can we do to take punk out of the hands of big business?
Well, it's almost impossible to get big business out of anything... Big business is pretty much looming over everything. The best I think we can do is not work with them. If enough punk-run businesses start up and continue to grow and co-operate with each other, we'll be set!

Should we be just as adamant about remaining "independent" in areas of our lives outside of punk rock?
Yeah, I work at a family-run print shop and I see how important it is everyday. In some aspects it's impossible to remain independent and you kind of have to go along with the flow. But you can go on in life and support independent businesses and help those people out.

Is it okay to trade/download MP3s of independent/DIY punk bands without paying?
I think to be able to sample a few tracks or whatever from a album to hear a band is totally cool and a really good way to check and see if you would like to investigate a band further, but downloading a whole record is totally not cool at all. Many labels are doing this as a side job (usually) and all the money from the records go into making more records and albums, so the money is very important and if you are getting a whole album, it makes it hard for the label to keep going.

Why don't punks have a problem with Rupert Murdoch's MySpace.com? Is there an alternative?
Things like MySpace should be taken in small strides. It's a good source to connect with people from all over the world and hear new bands. It is not a good thing to become so involved with it, that it's your only source of promotion…and to get a little revenge back for a dick like Murdoch, don't click on the banners, ever!

Is it okay to make a living off of punk rock?
It's okay if you don't forget how you got started. If it gets to the point where you are putting out music strictly to make a few bucks for yourself and your date, that is wicked lame and quit the business right away…but, if you can keep the ethics up and keep having fun then that is a totally radical way to spend your life.

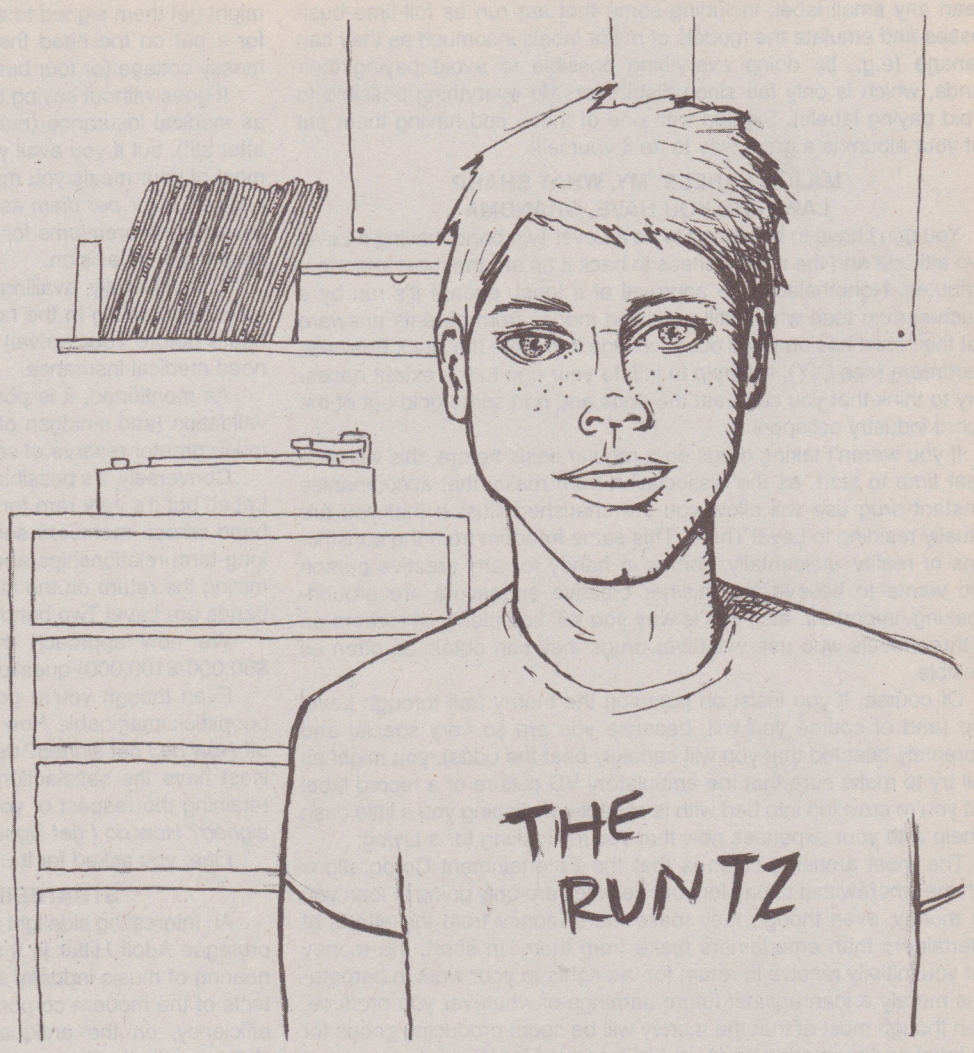
Give Praise Records / PO Box 494 / Barnstable, MA 02630 / www.givepraiserecords.com

WE'RE GONNA MAKE IT!

It seems that a year doesn't go by without one or two people inquiring, before their medication kicks in, what the Phantom Surfers have been up to. As a matter of fact, the last few years have been filled with incredibly successful concerts all over the world. Although none of those concerts happened to be ours, we were fortunate enough to see a few of them: Ivo Pogorelich was simply stupendous at the Panzram Memorial Hall!

The Phantom Surfers, on the other hand, have been selflessly laboring on their guide to the World of Rock (as well as referring to ourselves in the third person plural). Who better to guide hapless souls through the ins and outs of that industry, having experienced everything from playing dingy bars for our drunk friends to being sniffed at by A&R reps to playing dingy bars for our drunk friends again? Following are some excerpts from this forthcoming opus.

By Mike Lucas.



THE THREE LEVELS™

Before examining the machinations of Major Labels, it is necessary to acquaint you with The Three Levels™ theory of rock. This paradigm is a cornerstone to understanding the World of Rock. If you fail to grasp this fundamental concept, don't bother to complete reading this tome. Instead, look to a more prestigious career; undertaker, mob hitman, or author of how-to books.

Level One is the largest and most varied of the Three Levels. Anyone who gets together for the sheer joy of the music falls into Level One: barbershop quartets, small town symphonies, local bluegrass bands, etc. The members have other means of supporting themselves and their families; music is simply a pleasant diversion, as fishing and bocci ball is for others, from the daily crush of life.

If you have decided that you simply must make music you career, you will most likely end up being a Level Two schlub. This unwitting and unfortunate group of souls constitutes the vast majority of working musicians. Wedding band? Level Two. Top 40 cover band? Level Two. Touring band, either on the way up, or on the way down, without a hit record? The epitome of Level Two.

It is edifying to examine the delusions that drive those who toil in Level Two. Their careers can be divided into three phases:

Phase One: "We're gonna make it!"

Characteristics: Cockiness, unbridled optimism and a steady diet of fairy dust washed down with unicorn milk.

Phase Two: "This is gonna be our year!"

Characteristics: Quiet desperation, hard work and panther sweat.

Phase Three: "We shoulda been huge."

Characteristics: Anger, bitterness, blame and quiffing the bladder.

At which point we extend a heartfelt "Boo hoo." There is no point on pondering why "they" received the adulation and rewards "you" expected. Maybe they "whored" themselves. Maybe you refused to compromise on anything to protect your "Artistic Vision." Or maybe those who made it to Level Three (the land of milk, honey and heroin) were willing to be bigger assholes than you.

THE DIY WAY

While waiting for your Big Break, you may find a that a stint in the world of DIY provides valuable experience, as well as opportunities to make contacts that will benefit you until better contacts come along.

DIY stands for Do-It-Yourself, a key component of rock dating back to the '50s, when the likes of Jerry McCain ("Choo Choo Rock," "Geronimo Rock") and Sleepy MacWilliams ("Hillbilly Rock," "Rock 'n' Roll Rock") recorded and released their own records. Some pioneering DIY artists only maintained control up to the point of handing over the master recordings to a small label that would subsequently neglect to pay them, while others went so far as to pay for the manufacture of the records, which they then supplied to distributors that subsequently neglected to pay them (a practice that remains popular to this day, at least with the distributors).

Similarly, in the '60s many garage bands scraped together the money to release their own records (generally singles), selling them at dances, giving them to friends and disguising their voices to make frequent phone calls to local radio stations' request lines.

The '70s saw a resurgence in DIY, as numerous pre-Punk, proto-Punk, punkety-Punk and other types of underground bands defied the apathy of the Industry and the record-buying public by releasing their own records in hopes that the few people to purchase their efforts would be able to turn large profits as soon as eBay was invented.

In the present full flowering of the DIY concept, it has come to mean any small label, including some that are run as full-time businesses and emulate the models of major labels insomuch as they can manage (e.g., by doing everything possible to avoid paying their bands, which is only fair since distributors do everything possible to avoid paying labels). Signing with one of these and having them put out your album is a great way to do it yourself!

MAJOR LABELS: MY, WHAT SHARP LAWYERS YOU HAVE, GRANDMA

You don't have to be signed to be a Level Two band: having a Level Two attitude and the recklessness to back it up are the most important attributes. Nonetheless, the approval of a label, even if it's run by a couch-surfing teen who's still receiving money from parents unaware that their child has dropped out of college to pursue the Rock Business pipedream (see DIY), will help to inflate your ego to the extent necessary to think that you can beat the odds and pan some gold out of the record industry cesspool.

If you weren't taking drugs on a regular basis before, this will be a great time to start, as the dissociation from reality that accompanies constant drug use will allow you the cherished illusion that you are actually residing in Level Three. This same freedom from the constrictions of reality, incidentally, comes in handy for any creative person who wants to believe that his/her creative endeavors are groundbreaking, important, etc.; this is why you will find plenty of rockers on all three levels who use whatever drugs they can obtain as often as possible.

Of course, if you insist on pursuing the thorny trail through Level Two (and of course you will, because you *are* so very special and supremely talented that you will certainly beat the odds), you might as well try to make sure that the ambulatory VD culture of a record label that you're crawling into bed with is capable of slipping you a little cash to help with your expenses now that you're Rocking for a Living.

The most amusing catch is that the Entertainment Corporations with the wherewithal to pay for your services are only going to loan you the money, even though they make more money from the efforts of entertainers than entertainers make from them. In short, the money that you initially receive in return for the rights to your work in perpetuity is merely a loan against future earnings of whatever you produce, even though most of that the money will be spent producing goods for the label and promoting what you've produced for them.

The exceptional bit of ingenuity lurking in this brimstone-reeking pact is that you will almost probably be forced to spend much of this loan on services that the label, or another subsidiary of their parent corporation, will provide at the inflated costs that you can afford now that you're Level Two rich: their recording studio, their engineer, their graphic design department, their video production company, their publicist, etc.

And don't forget the distant corporate branch that manufactures official Rock merchandise with old world craftsmanship in their quaint sweatshops in exotic locales! (Those with the liability of something approximating a Social Conscience may rest assured that almost $1.19 a day will trickle into the pockets of the children who produce your $35 official tour tee shirts).

You will also be spending a chunk of mazuma to mount the concert tours that are supposed to make your product (which the label owns) more valuable.

Since corporations have indefinite life spans, your label will be free to generate revenue from your work long after the rights of any of your statutory next-of-kin or other heirs lapse. So if, in dim futurity, your artistic legacy actually becomes the hoped-for money tree, your label won't even have to bother with creative accounting to keep the yearly simoleon harvest to themselves. (Given this oppressive state of affairs, it is the moral duty of any artist affiliated with an entertainment conglomerate to protest by producing vapid, mediocre nonsense of no lasting worth. Fortunately, virtually everyone in the Entertainment Industry is doing just this. Credo!)

Why do record labels dictate such unfair terms? For the same reason that dogs lick their own genitals (and yours, if you apply a little peanut butter—*or so we've heard*): because they can. The pee-filled talent pool is crowded with bands nigh indistinguishable from each other, all willing to mold themselves and their product to whatever might get them signed to an Entertainment Corporation, and so eager for a pat on the head that they will gladly sell their birthrights for a messy cottage (or tour bus).

It goes without saying that you will not be provided with perks such as medical insurance (maybe you'd better splurge on clean needles after all!), but if you avail yourself of the backstage deli trays and skip most of your meals you may be able to save enough out of your daily allowance (or *per diem* as the rock groups of ancient Rome called it) to make the premiums for whatever quality coverage Ed McMahon is hawking on television.

Coincidentally, availing yourself of the backstage deli trays (which have been sitting in the rat and roach infested backstage for several hours before your arrival) is a good way to make certain that you'll need medical insurance.

As mentioned, it is possible to operate on Level Two without the validation (and smidgen of operating capital) of a label, but it takes a much greater reserve of self-love, as well as money, to do so.

Conversely, it's possible to stay at Level One after signing to a Real Label, but it's very rare for a Real Label to want anything to do with a band whose members selfishly refuse to sacrifice financial security, long-term relationships and personal happiness for the sake of maximizing the return on the label's investment. For the most part, signed bands are Level Two bands and Level Two bands are signed bands.

We now approach the $1,000,000 (actually, more often the $50,000-$100,000) question: ***How do I get signed?***

Even though you're going to get the stinky end of the crappiest poopstick imaginable *How do I get signed?* and you'd be much better off *How do I get signed?* developing your own *How do I get signed?* at least have the satisfaction of *How do I get signed?* not to mention retaining the respect of yourself and those around you *How do I get signed? How do I get signed? How do I get signed?*

Fine, you asked for it…

STRATEGIES FOR GETTING SIGNED

An interesting sidelight to the careers of Henry Ford and his ardent protégée Adolf Hitler is that, in the course of their justly famed pioneering of music industry ethics, they also became the leading architects of the modern corporate entity (a vast improvement, in terms of efficiency, on the antiquated corporate state promulgated by the Vatican with it reliance on secret caches of rare pornography and Jesuit gold).

Less interesting (but, sadly, more germane to the present work) are the ways in which the Industry (as insiders are wont to call it), in its ceaseless quest of the endless pursuit of the continual search to discover ways of maintaining their stringent policy of quantity over quality, has modernized the practices of these two trailblazers. Especially helpful in this regard have been Industry-sponsored studies in the fields of psychology and sociology such as the Stanford prison experiment, the CIA's MKULTRA program and that guy who attached electrodes from car batteries to the private parts of chimps and posted videos of his experiments on the Internet.

It is thanks to such noble efforts that we, the public, are provided with the Entertainment We Deserve. This is why it is essential that, be it jazz, punk, alternative, indie (especially indie!), or whatever type of music is in "your bag," you only purchase music that has been accorded Major Label approval. Remember—they wouldn't put it out if they didn't want you to buy it!

So how, you are still wondering, do you become a part of this exciting world?

Getting signed is all about connections, networking, interfacing. It's a very simple process that can be summed up by that old adage: It's not *what* you know, it's *who* you *blow*. By ingratiating yourself to the most powerful people you can latch onto, discarding them for the most powerful people they know and repeating the process indefinitely, you will eventually find yourself signed: it really is that simple.

Typical How-To books on the music business will advise you to record a demo, simply because all the other struggling bands do so. In truth, recording a demo is a waste of your time and your parents' money. None of the Industry pundits know what the hell they're looking for. Burn a CD of some classic rock and submit that as your demo; nobody's going to listen to it anyway. What they're going to want to know is about your "buzz."

If you have a well-connected manager or entertainment lawyer, some people may actually pay attention to his or her buzzing. But how to get a member of that Blessed Realm to vouch for you? By building up some buzz on your own, you little bumblebee.

A member of your band dying of a drug overdose makes for good buzz, but make sure you have a replacement lined up. You can also build buzz by getting your friends and families to harass newspapers, periodicals, and radio stations (don't forget to have them disguise their voices when making multiple phone calls) with requests to feature your band. This is especially effective if you have no product to promote: radio stations will feel foolish that they don't have your music on tap and word of your popularity will spread through the grapevine like vine rot.

If, as is likely, you've already alienated your friends and family with your insufferable posturing, you'll have to engage in these antics your own damn self. While you're at it, don't forget to stuff the ballot when the local free magazine has their annual reader's poll. Since no one has ever employed these clever strategies before, you're sure to fool everyone!

As soon as you can trick someone into believing that there's a demand for your brand of musical snakeoil, others will quickly beat a path to your door for fear of not getting in on the ground floor of some emerging trend.

Now that you've really got a buzz going, you've got to keep that buzz going. Of course, that means more drugs, but it also means keeping your eyes open for the opportunity to make more connections.

Use any connections that you've amassed to make better connections, then cut the losers loose. So what if they believed in you when no one else did? So what if it's your sweet little old grandmother? So what! Kick her for a field goal, even if you have to dig her up to do it; there's no room for sentiment here, bucko.

If you want to reach for the stars, you're going to have to use anyone available as a rung in the ladder. Some will say that you should be nice to the people you meet on your way up because you'll be seeing them again on the way down: that's the way losers think. *You're a winner and you're never coming down!*

If you keep betraying the trust of those near and dear to you while kissing enough ass (a euphemism for the much less tasteful acts that you'll actually be performing) of those higher on the ladder, you will find yourself with the recording contract you so richly deserve.

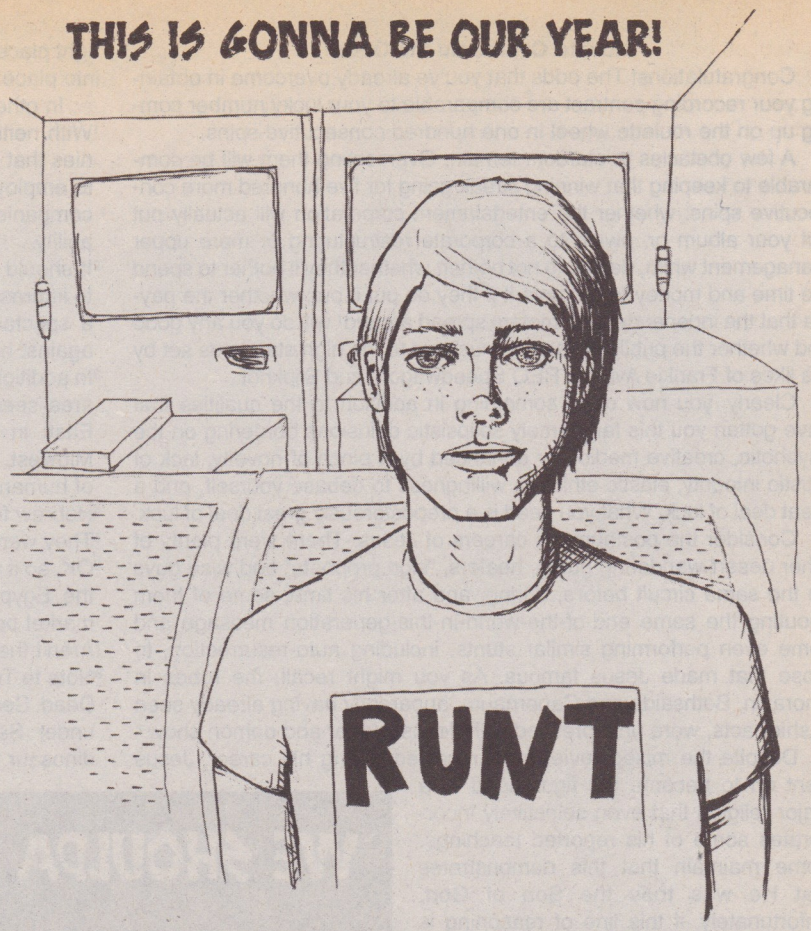
ASSHOLES ALL!
YOUR GUIDE TO THE ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY

There is one Big Secret to the Industry. Without this Big Secret, you will be drifting through the tempestuous seas of Stardom on a rudderless, provisionless raft with no idea of your bearings. Armed with this Big Secret, you will have some idea of your bearings as you drift through those tempestuous seas on a rudderless raft with no provisions.

The Big Secret

(Warning: before reading the following, think twice about whether you *really* want to know the truth. This knowledge, advanced beyond any teachings dreamt of by Rosicrucians, 32nd degree masons or even graduates of the Heald Institute of Technology, has been known to cause severe despondency, sometimes culminating in suicide.)

EVERY PERSON WHO CAN HELP YOU ON YOUR JOURNEY TO STARDOM IS GOING TO BE AN ASSHOLE WHO WILL GLADLY SPEND $5 TO CHEAT YOU OUT OF 50 CENTS. THIS IS ALSO TRUE OF THOSE WHO CAN'T HELP YOU EVEN THOUGH THEY CLAIM THAT THEY CAN.



Words of Consolation to Help You Cope with the Big Secret

You don't really need to worry too much about what you've just read; most of the time, the assholes will be able to cheat you out of your 50 cents without having to lay out any additional money. In fact, you'll help them to cheat you. Why? Because *you want*, nay, *NEED to be a star*. It's an expression of who you are!

Once you're a star, of course, it's your time to shine. That's when you get to be the asshole that you've always dreamed of being.

Do the Math!

Eggheaded pundits frequently decry the Entertainment Industry's lack of creativity. This is because they foolishly focus on the well-digested Product that spews forth from the Industry's nether regions. If one craves gossamer arabesques, fumes of fancy and daring explorations of the realm of the unlikely, one need look no further than the Industry's accounting practices, where gross sales magically disappear into mysterious dimensions with forbidding names such as "reported returns," "unreported returns," and "projected unreported returns"; where an endless, imp-like swarm of expenses, ancillary expenses, carried-forward expenses and projected expenses await to engulf any payments owed to the band; where, in short, you're up the shittiest of shit creeks with a paddle made of shit.

Unless you happen to become one of the very, *very* few Artistes who manage to sell a few million units, that is. Even then, the terms of your contract may prevent you from realizing more money from your first hit album and subsequent tour than if you'd kept your job at the shoe store.

Of course, you can—and will—hire a shyster leech to use your leverage as a hot item to get more favorable terms on subsequent releases, but if your hot seller turns out to have been a flash in the pan, the increased points on your cut-out CDs won't put any jingle in your pocket to replace the pieces of silver you had to pay your lawyer.

Fortunately, of course, you *are* one of the special ones. Possibly even the mostest special that ever has been! I know it; more importantly, *you* know it. Now just go out and convince a few million other people, keep them convinced and you've got it made!

How to Overcome the Odds

Congratulations! The odds that you've already overcome in obtaining your recording contract are comparable to your lucky number coming up on the roulette wheel in one hundred consecutive spins.

A few obstacles to stardom remain. Overcoming them will be comparable to keeping that winning streak going for five hundred more consecutive spins: whether the entertainment corporation will actually put out your album or, owing to a corporate restructuring or mere upper management whim, decide to not bother; whether they'll bother to spend the time and money to promote it if they do put it out; whether the payola that the independent promoters spread around[1] will do you any good and whether the public finds your music up to the high standards set by the likes of Frankie Avalon, REO Speedwagon, and Slipknot..

Clearly, you now need something in addition to the qualities that have gotten you this far, namely solipsistic delusions bordering on the psychotic, creative mediocrity enhanced by a pinch of novelty, lack of artistic integrity, elastic ethics, a willingness to debase yourself, and a great deal of luck. What you need is a preposterously great deal of luck.

Consider the posthumous careers of Jesus. There were plenty of other desert-wandering gurus, healers, "sign prophets" and wise guys on the same circuit before, during, and after his time, some of them spouting the same end-of-the-world-in-this-generation message and some even performing similar stunts, including auto-resurrection, to those that made Jesus famous. As you might recall, the rubes in Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum, apparently having already seen flashier acts, were unimpressed with Jesus's leper and demon show.[2]

Despite the mixed reviews he received during his career, Jesus went on to become the figurehead of a major religion that even selectively incorporates some of his reported teachings. Some maintain that this demonstrates that He was truly the Son of God. Unfortunately, if this line of reasoning is correct, it also proves the literal truth of numerous other religions that don't quite jibe with Christianity's claims of exclusive rights to the One True God whom they borrowed from the Jews and forgot to give back, so we'll have to look elsewhere for an explanation of Jesus's eventual triumph over the other miracle-slingers who roamed the Wild Middle East[3] impressing the rubem.[4]

So what did he have that the others didn't? First, he was in the right place at the right time to become a symbol with some post-mortem staying power. A few score years later, a marketing team was looking for a way to broaden the appeal of some Self Help scrolls that had been only slightly successful, despite performing well with the Essenes in Qumran focus groups; these canny marketeers came up with the bright idea of adding His name, along with some sayings and doings ascribed to him in that rumor mill that eggheads call "the oral tradition." This new improved package caught the public imagination in a way that caused followers to claim that Jesus was bigger than the Beatles.[5]

A few centuries later, Constantine had his vision of a cross[6] in the sky, inspiring the Roman Empire's licensing and distribution deal and the rest is (literally) History: Holy Wars[7], the Children's Crusade, the Inquisition, the Saint Bartholomew's Day Massacre, assorted Protestant Witch Hunts, all that good stuff. And all because Jesus was in the right place at the right time and everything afterwards happened to fall into place.[8]

In other words, luck.

[1]With neither the knowledge or consent of the entertainment companies that hire them, of course; it would be a violation of the RICO Act to employ independent contractors to perform illegal activities for the companies in order for those corporations to maintain plausible deniability.

[2]It should go without saying that such supernatural trickery would fail to impress modern minds, who can only register awe when faced with a spectacle such as Uri Geller bending spoons by pressing them against his forehead.

[3]In addition to being credulous in superstitious matters, residents of the area seem to have had no idea that they were living in the Middle East: in their ignorance, they probably referred to Rome as the Midwest. What great strides have long since been made in the store of human knowledge!

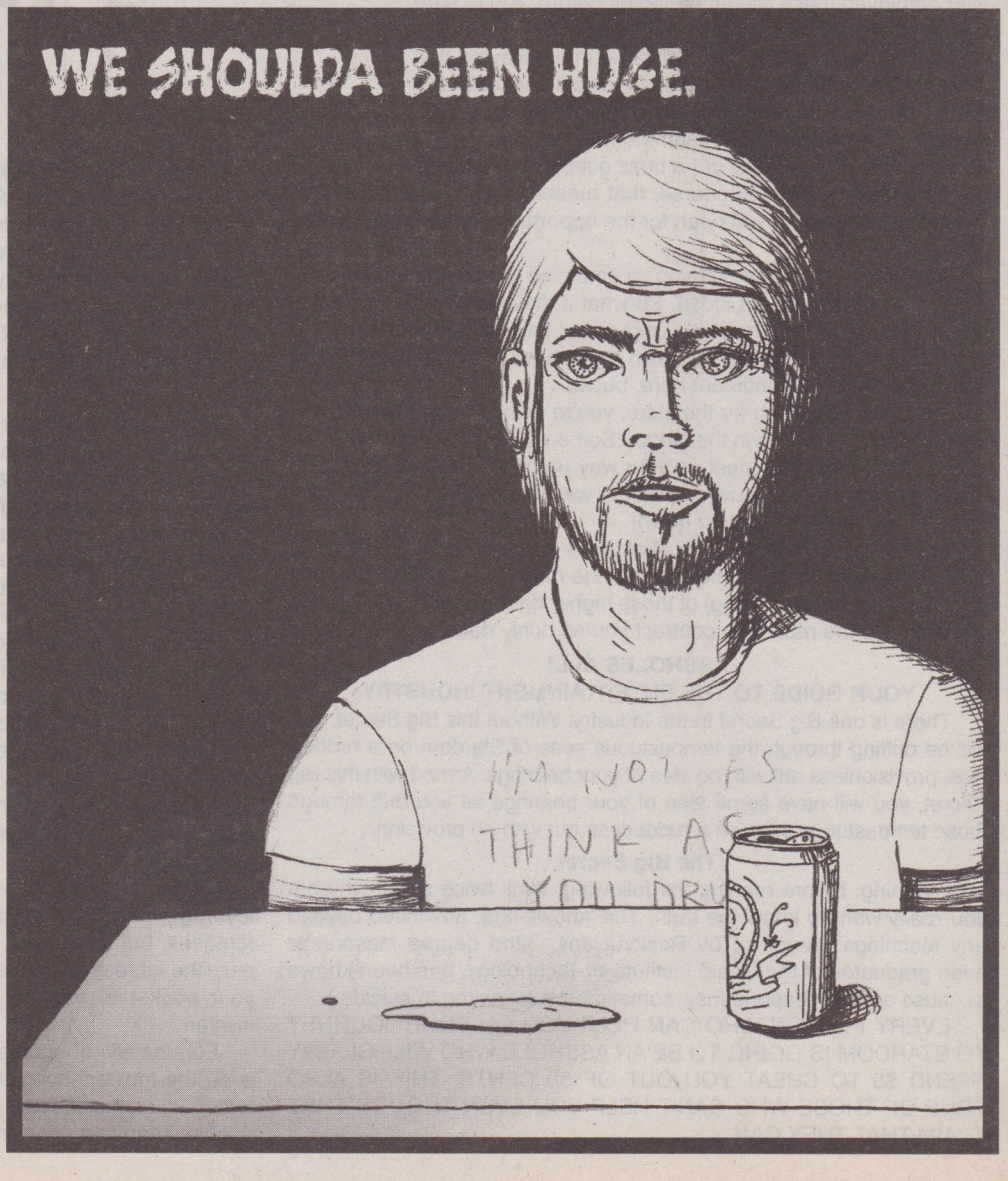
[4]Hebrew for "rubes."

[5]They were probably right, since the Beatles hadn't been invented yet.

[6]OK, so it was actually an ankh. Big deal: Constantine quickly saw that the Egyptian gods had already achieved their maximum potential market penetration.

[7]Aren't they all?

[8]Note to True Believers: yes, we know the Bible is literally true and the Dead Sea Manuscripts are actually fakes that were manufactured under Satan's personal supervision to confuse humans, just like dinosaur fossils.



THE LAWRENCE ARMS

In a day and age when many sizable punk bands are turning their backs on the underground, The Lawrence Arms have been keeping it real. Sure, they're on a big label and play bigger clubs, but there aren't any other bands of their size that speak out against the Warped Tour and speak up for small punk bands and punk clubs. It's nice to know that a little taste of success doesn't affect every band out there. I got to learn a few things from this interview: The Lawrence Arms are great people and their new record is an earnest punk rock endeavor. Good times all around. Interview by Gen X

MRR: The Lawrence Arms have been playing for years and it seems like your band is finally taking off. You're on tour with NOFX now, got a tour with Alkaline Trio coming up, etc. Have you finally made it?

Um yeah, we actually fly to all our shows now, and we only communicate with each other through managers and attorneys. Actually, things are pretty much the same for us. We drive, play, get drunk, pass out and then wake up and do it all again. It's great that we get to play these big shows, but we're just some guys who like to have fun, and we're getting the chance to do it right now. We rock a pretty simple program.

MRR: The new record, *Oh! Calcutta!* has your band as one cohesive unit. You guys have spent the last three records blending into one another, and now it seems like the fusion is fully complete. Do you agree with that?

Actually, I think that our last record was us at our most polarized, and in a very real way, this record is a response to that. We really don't want to ever repeat ourselves and we'd kind of mined the ideas of Chris and I doing really different, disparate songs. This record is something else. It's about brotherhood and friendship and steeling yourself against the shit that the world throws at you with your friends and your beers or whatever, and the only way that we could convey that sonically was for us to sing together. We're best friends, you know? And we are the people that we're singing about and to, so it made sense to do it all together.

MRR: Are their any records in particular that you would specifically cite as influencing *Oh! Calcutta!*? Give me five records!

Nomeansno *Wrong*, Fifteen *Buzz*, Guns 'n' Roses *Appetite for Destruction*, Beastie Boys *Paul's Boutique*...hmmm that's only four, but I think it's pretty cohesive. The last one may seem kind of out there at first, but we really went into this thinking that we wanted to trade off our vocals in a similar way to how the Beastie Boys did on *Paul's*. We obviously didn't go all the way with it, but it was definitely a factor in how the songs turned out.

MRR: You have toured with a lot of bands that have left the punk scene to join the major label ranks. Do you have any opinion on your friends' bands taking that step? (Rise Against and Against Me! for example.)

Eh, does anyone even care about this stuff anymore? I don't know. I'm completely behind the decisions of my friends. That's what being friends is all about, you know. That being said, I don't want to sound like I'm saying I support this really fucked up decision, because I don't think it's a fucked up decision at all. It's a logical step for some bands to take and if they're happy working with those people then I'm stoked for them. I love where we are and I think that Fat Wreck Chords is an appropriate place for us, but the bands you're talking about were growing so fast and when everything starts getting so much bigger so quickly, sometimes you have to upsize your label also. It's not something I foresee being an issue for us, but those guys know what they're doing.

MRR: Okay, let's talk some shit. You have made some public rips about how the Warped Tour economy is fucking up the punk scene. In short, what's your beef?

Well, see, there used to be this really great thing that happened every summer. All the big bands would gather up some cool support bands and hit the road and play club shows. Now, you figure at any given time there are maybe thirty big punk rock bands, each of those bands are taking two or three smaller bands on tour and playing in clubs. So, that's approximately ninety bands that have cool tours, and thirty shows that support clubs and thirty nights for kids in various towns to have something cool to do. Now, all those big bands just play the Warped Tour. It's one day, and it's in some stupid fairground. As a result, small clubs are shutting down, small bands are forced to play Warped Tour which totally sucks. Try driving all night, and standing in the sun all day only to play some shitty outdoor stage to ten kids for no money while Rancid plays a hundred feet away or do a small headlining tour that's competing with the Warped Tour. That blows. Now, I'm not even trying to bitch overtly about the fact that Warped Tour is a big stupid corporate event and everything is expensive and the bands on it tend to suck. I'm more pissed that this goliath posing as the ultimate manifestation of punk rock is completely dismantling the DIY economy and no one seems to care. These fucking bands who could do something about it are lazy or scared or both and it drives me nuts. People say things like "Oh, it's like punk rock summer camp" or "It's great to be able to sell so much merch and only play for half an hour". Fuck all that. The Warped Tour sucks and I don't give a shit how many of your friends are on it or how fucking little you have to work in order to get paid. Chances are, if you're in a big punk rock band you got into this with at least an inkling of a feeling that doing something that can completely thrive in an alternative, underground economy was pretty cool, and now, you're sitting on your busses letting all that be destroyed actively participating in destroying it even! And the reasons for doing it are so fucking shallow. I mean, my shitty little band tours up against the Warped Tour every summer, so I'd assume that any band could. They're just complacent and until more people start realizing how completely shitty the whole thing is, it's not going to go away. It's just gonna get worse.

MRR: People's initial response to the new record has been really good, and it's well-deserved. But there's also something we haven't seen for The Lawrence Arms in the past: haters. What do you think about your detractors, and do you think it's maybe a *good* sign that people care enough to talk shit?

Maybe. It's funny because when our last record came out it was to the sound of deafening indifference, and when people finally listened to it, the response was "Oh this record sucks, we'll never hear from this band again." Now, people are hearing this record and, while the response has been overwhelmingly good, there are people saying "Oh, it's no *Greatest Story Ever Told*" which I find to be pretty hilarious, because we got a lot of shit for that record. It's as though they forgot that they all hated our last record for so long before they came around to it, and now they're judging this one before they even have a chance to see the final product. Again, this is a small group of people and I'm flattered that anyone cares enough to go through the trouble of getting our record early and taking the sound personally, so in that regard I guess it is a good thing. It's different, and different usually provokes a response. And that's good too. Also, I'd way rather have people hate us than not care at all.

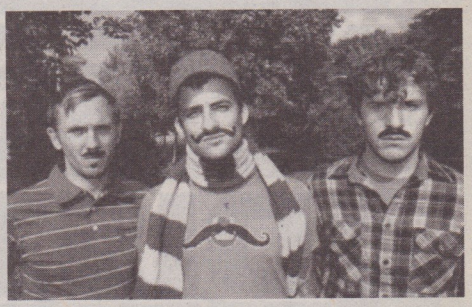
MRR: You've toured with a lot of different bands over the last couple years. Who are your favorites and why? Give me a few examples, I'm sure you love them all!

I loved the Hot Water Music tour, those guys are great and they were a very big part of the reason that we ended up staying a band and recording the record that we did. Hugely inspirational. Not necessarily sonically, but in terms of attitude. There was such a long time when I thought that we were the only guys out there with no makeup, just cruising around, drinking beer and playing little shows because that was the thing we loved to do. It started getting depressing and when we went on that tour we were like 'Whoa, we're not alone!' and that was really empowering I guess. That tour was the turning point for The Lawrence Arms and probably the best thing we've done. There is no close second.

MRR: What do you guys have in store for the future? Spill some secrets, any thoughts on upcoming releases, tours?

We're gonna do a lot of touring on *Oh! Calcutta!* and we've got somewhere in the neighborhood of six B-sides that will hopefully see the light of day in the near future. Let's get a beer or something.

Visit the band online at www.thelawrencearms.net to learn more about them.



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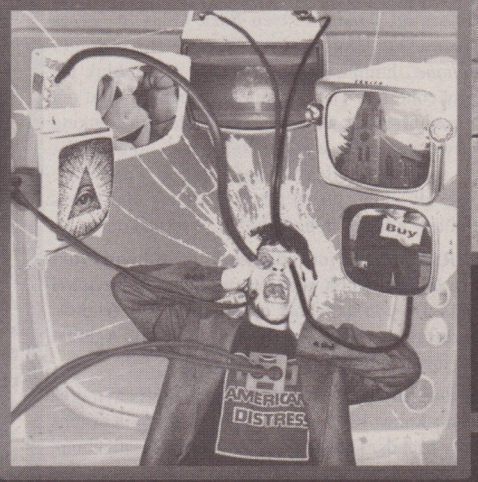

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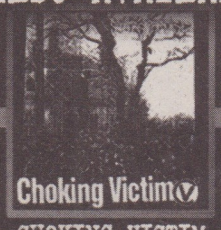

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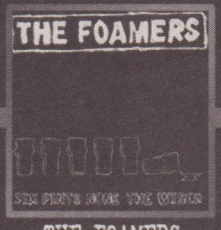

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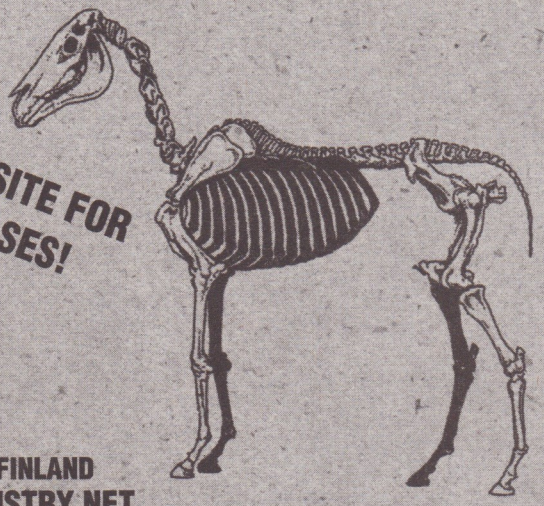

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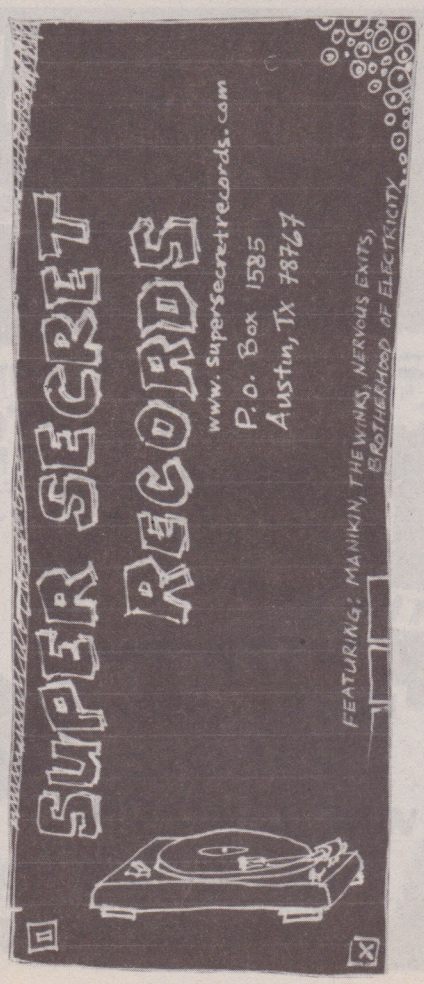
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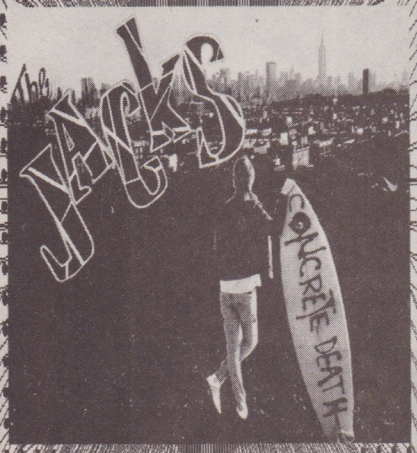

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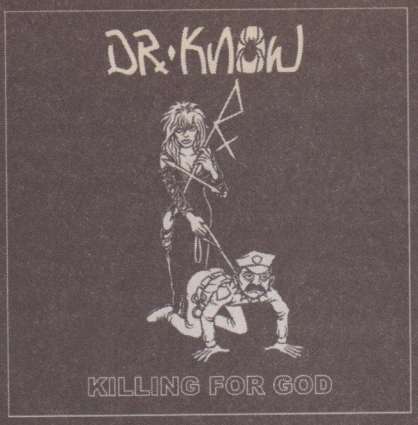

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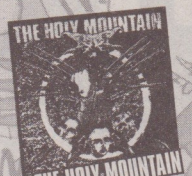

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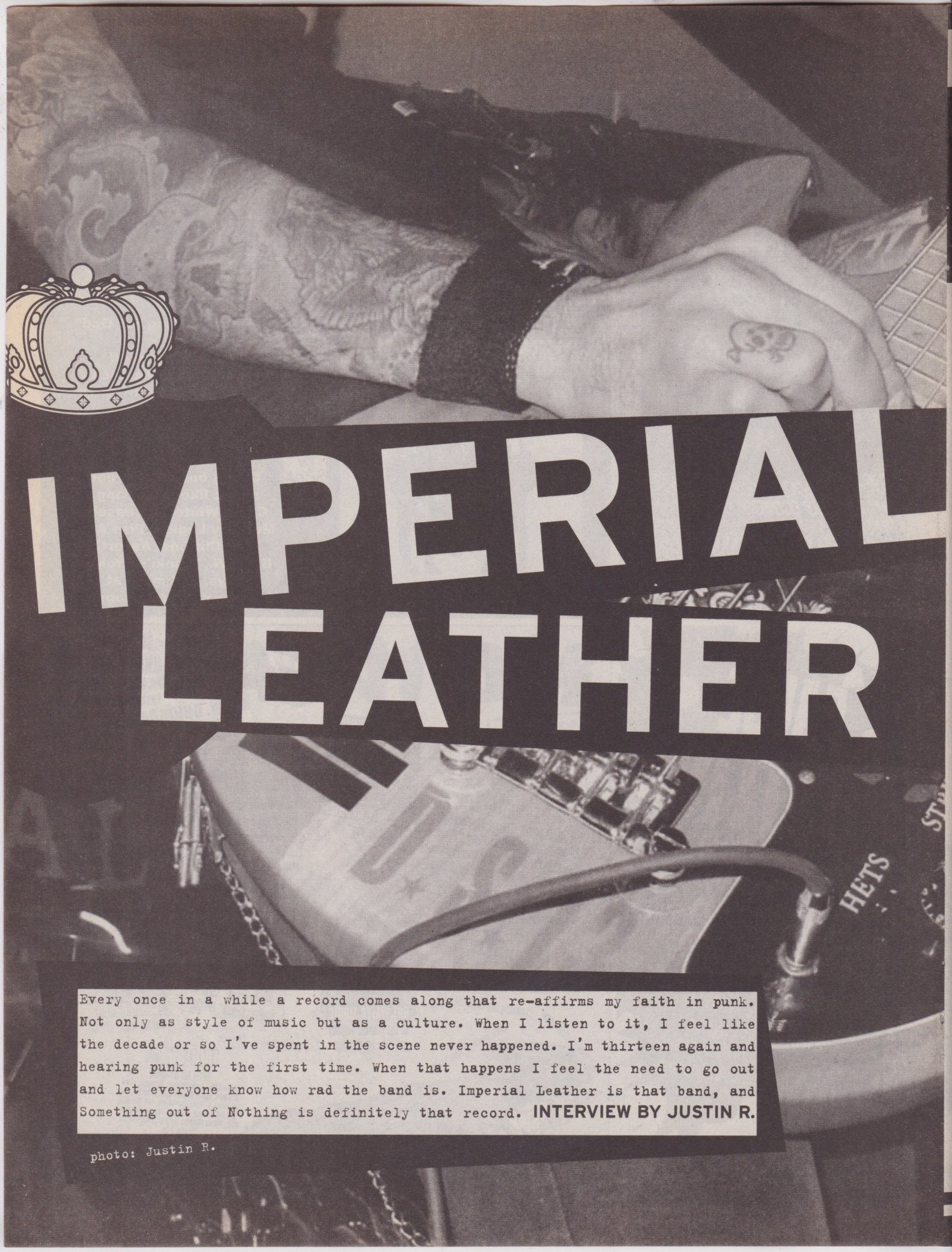

IMPERIAL LEATHER

Every once in a while a record comes along that re-affirms my faith in punk. Not only as style of music but as a culture. When I listen to it, I feel like the decade or so I've spent in the scene never happened. I'm thirteen again and hearing punk for the first time. When that happens I feel the need to go out and let everyone know how rad the band is. Imperial Leather is that band, and Something out of Nothing is definitely that record. **INTERVIEW BY JUSTIN R.**

photo: Justin R.

MRR: AS TO NOT DEVIATE FROM "INTERVIEW STATUS QUO," LET'S START OFF WITH THE BASICS. WHO ARE YOU, WHAT DO YOU DO AND WHY DO YOU DO IT?

138: I'm 138. I play bass because when I picked my instrument back in 1993 I figured the guitar had too many strings. Not the most musical fella, no sir. I still do this because I still fucking love hardcore punk more than most things life has to offer. Always have, always will.

KENKO: Kenko here, I play the guitar and sing some. I do it because I have to. I don't know why, but I have to.

AMYL: I'm Amyl. I sing, scream, and toss a mic stand around cuz it's fun as hell and it feels like home.

KRISSE: I'm Krisse, I play guitar and occasionally scream something in the background. I do it cuz it's the only instrument I vaguely know how to play and it's fun.

DANNY: I'm Danny. I sing and dance and try to avoid being hit by Amyl's mic, because it hurts when I don't.

MATTE: Matte, I play the drums and in everyone's best interest I'll stick to that. I'm too tone deaf to even try to sing a single note and I really like the energy that you get from playing drums, so it suits me perfectly.

MRR: YOU'VE HAD A FEW LINEUP CHANGES. MOST RECENTLY ADDING 138 ON BASS AND WHO-KILLED-MATTE? ON DRUMS. THERE ARE SIX PEOPLE IN YOUR BAND SHOTS BUT WHEN YOU RECENTLY PLAYED IN THE US THERE WAS ONLY FIVE OF YOU. WHAT HAPPENED AND WHERE WAS THE MYSTERIOUS SIXTH MEMBER?

DANNY: That must be me, right? I was abducted by my nuclear family, and now have to work hard to earn my place back in the band. Just a couple of weeks before we were about to leave for the US tour I realized that I could not go, as I was becoming a father again and could not leave my wife in the late stages of pregnancy while also having to take care of our first kid, who wasn't much more than a year old at the time.

Looking back I wish that I could have seen much earlier where we were heading, that would have saved my friends in the band from a lot of extra work and worry. So, I'm still having a break from band things apart from what I can do from home.

MRR: THE BAND IS NAMED AFTER A TYPE OF BRITISH BAR SOAP. COULD YOU EXPLAIN, TO THOSE OF US NOT FAMILIAR WITH ENGLISH BATHING HABITS, THE STORY BEHIND IT?

DANNY: Is that so? I thought that they named the soap after the band, even though I found that extremely odd. And I know nothing of English bathing habits. Are there any to know of?

KRISSE: It's a soap traditionally used by British punks to spike up their hair. Not so many people know that about it outside of the UK, which makes the name a bit weird for many, but we like it!

MRR: THE LP (SOMETHING OUT OF NOTHING ON PROFANE EXISTENCE) IS FUCKING AWESOME. NOT ONLY DO YOU COMBINE EVERY ELEMENT OF THE DIFFERENT FACTIONS OF PUNK MUSIC BUT YOU DO IT IN A WAY THAT FEELS TOTALLY ORIGINAL. IS THIS SOMETHING YOU SET OUT TO ACHIEVE OR WAS IT A MORE ORGANIC PROCESS?

KENKO: Thanks for saying that! I think it has a lot to do with the fact that we work hard with the arrangement of the songs, hmmm, actually harder than with the actual parts and riffs themselves. The usual process for us is that someone brings in a couple of riffs that contain too many details, and then we start reducing them to the basics, so that the original guitar part often becomes the bass line, and the guitars just play the basic chords. Then we start adding new details to it I guess...

It's really easy to get carried away when you're trying to write a song at home, you kinda compensate for vocals and drums by putting too many notes and hooks in.

As far as originality goes, if stuff is too bloody familiar we just chuck it, or change it. Everything has been done, but that's no excuse for not trying to put your own twist on stuff.

KRISSE: Yeah, we really put in some hard work into those songs and I'm personally very happy with the result of that, especially compared to our earlier stuff. I don't think we combine all that on purpose, it's just that we listen to many different kinds of punk so when we write music together that's what happens.

MRR: THERE'S A DEFINITE ROCK UNDERTONE TO MOST OF YOUR SONGS. BUT IT'S NOT IN A CHEESY WAY. WHAT'S SOME OF THE STUFF THAT YOU DRAW INFLUENCE FROM?

KENKO: I have very little distance and I am constantly confused about how we sound, but I'm always happily surprised when reviewers say we have a UK82 style sound—which has always been my personal main influence. Many bands from that era have a rock 'n' roll feeling to their sound and arrangement—like GBH, Broken Bones, Discharge, Damned, Blitz, etc. Most of those bands play faster than we do, but they all have that immortal bass line driven, guitar lead spiked sound!

AMYL: I loooove American punk: Southern CA, Boston, DC, wherever.

138: For me it's the same as always: old hardcore punk from USA, Japan, Sweden, Brazil, and Italy. And, of course, old, barbaric, and true chaos metal. Keep it simple and raw and you will succeed my friend.

KRISSE: I'm with Kenko on this one, really love the early '80s British stuff, but the slightly more chaotic ones like Disorder, Chaos UK, Ultra Violent and Chaotic Dischord.

MRR: IT SEEMS TO BE THE CASE THAT A LOT OF PUNK BANDS DON'T GIVE A SHIT ABOUT WHAT GEAR THEY USE. YOU'VE GOT REALLY GREAT GUITAR TONE AS WELL AS OVERALL SOUND AND I'M CURIOUS IF YOU FEEL THAT GOOD GEAR IS AN IMPORTANT FACTOR IN BEING A BAND.

KENKO: For us it is important, but as far as good gear goes, we don't use expensive shit, we are just trying to find what will suit us best, and we're still looking. If you want to sound like it did back in the day you have to use old stuff, so it's all about vintage equipment. We all play old tube heads that we picked up when they were a good deal. Getting something other than your generic Marshall Valvestate or whatever doesn't have to mean that it's expensive. Recycle it!

It was very important for us to meet and work with Frank E Male on the album. He told us straight up after we played a gig with his band Henry Fiat's Open Sore that we could be so much better if our guitar sound didn't suck. We had the right equipment but he thought it was too distorted! So later when we went to record at his studio, the Dustward, it was a lot about dropping the distortion and using overdrive in the amps instead, which made a huge difference.

MRR: I'VE HEARD THE GOVERNMENT IN SWEDEN DOLES OUT MONEY IF YOU FORM A BAND. DO YOU THINK THIS HELPS MAKE SWEDEN ONE OF THE PREMIERE COUN-

TRIES FOR ROCK 'N' ROLL OR DOES IT HINDER IT BY GIVING MONEY TO A BUNCH OF UNTALENTED MORONS SO THEY CAN START BANDS?

138: I think you are getting us confused with Canada. It's okay, it happens.

MRR: YOU'VE ALL PLAYED IN QUITE A FEW DIFFERENT COUNTRIES WITH A WIDE ARRAY OF ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES. HOW DO YOU THINK THIS AFFECTS THE PEOPLE AND SCENES IN THOSE AREAS? HAVE YOU SEEN A PATTERN IN THE WAY POLITICAL AND SOCIAL CONSTRUCTS AFFECT THE DIFFERENT REGIONS?

KENKO: That's a big question... To give a very concrete example of how economic circumstances affect the local scene: When we played in Craiova in Romania, we were one of the two Western bands that had played there ever! We almost broke the van in all the potholes on the road going there, and seriously overtook more donkey drawn carriages than we did cars. The local punks had no way of copying the promo CD we had sent to the guy who set the gig up, so they had all met up for a listening party instead and studied lyrics so they could sing along when we showed up, and so they did! It was a great gig!

A fight broke out during the show and a light bulb broke—the club owner charged the kid who set the show up for it, which ended up being like half of our gas money. We thought this was a little wrong, that we ended up paying for the fight but when we converted the currencies in the morning we realized how small a sum this was all about anyway—we pretty much got paid the value of a couple of light bulbs, so we left most of the money at the sleeping place and went and filled the van up with money from the German gigs instead. It's definitely worth doing it though, because the kids appreciate you coming to an extreme extent, and that's important in itself!

Also, Timisoara in Romania is probably one of the few places where I actually *really* considered buying 100 pints of lager at the pub like Bad News do in their movie, because I could actually afford doing that there!

AMYL: Women have written to us from Romania and said what a great influence we were on the women in the scene. With a woman singer and a woman driver you are a positive role model.

In Croatia, the women I spoke to at the show had to go their jobs the next day (in child care). The boys showed us around town. They were unemployed.

The highway from Germany into the Czech Republic has a few miles where women and girls stand on the road, outside their homes and sell their bodies. It is a brutal sight. The economics of women, family and sex are similar in all the countries we tour; the US very much included, it just takes different forms.

MRR: BACK TO THE MUSIC...YOU SING IN ENGLISH. THE LYRICS ARE REALLY WELL WRITTEN AND COVER A PRETTY BROAD AREA OF TOPICS. YET, AMYL IS AMERICAN AND THE REST OF YOU ARE SWEDISH. DOES THIS PRESENT A PROBLEM IN THE WRITING PROCESS OR DO YOU WORK TOGETHER TO FIND A MIDDLE GROUND?

AMYL: Everyone's English is great, so it hasn't posed a problem, but there are usually two people involved in writing a lyric so you have someone to bounce things off of. Kenko: To us Swedes it's a great asset to have Amyl in the band, so we don't have to write in goofy half Swedish half English (Swenglish) language.

MRR: THE LYRICAL STRUCTURE IS BUILT UPON DUAL, MALE/FEMALE VOCALS BUT DOESN'T COME OFF SOUNDING REDUNDANT IN THE FORMULA. ARE THE SONGS ARRANGED THIS WAY FROM THEIR INCEPTION OR DO YOU ASSIGN VOCALS DUTIES AFTER THE FACT?

AMYL: A little of both. It depends on the song and what comes first, the lyrics or the tune. We don't have a formula for how we write and I guess that's a good thing for us.

photo: jonas granvik

MRR: KEEPING WITH THE LYRIC SUBJECT, WHAT'S THE SONG "PETS IN HEAT" ABOUT?

AMYL: Punks have a lot of opinions about pets (and everything!). This song is about some of them.

DANNY: Isn't that the song with the most straightforward lyrics on the album? It's a "Girls Just Wanna Have Fun" for our furry friends!

MRR: 138 AND MATTE: OBVIOUSLY, YOU BRING YOUR OWN SENSE OF STYLE TO THE MUSIC. BUT, WHAT IS IT LIKE TO BE OUT PLAYING SONGS THAT YOU DIDN'T HAVE A HAND IN CREATING?

138: I have no problem with it at all. It was the same deal when I joined Bruce Banner, the band I was in prior to Imperial Leather. And when I and Matte joined we all decided that we should focus on writing new material right away, to present the new line-up and the somewhat new direction. That's why we played two new tunes, "Antibodies" and "Medium Vacuum", when we toured the States this past December/January.

MATTE: In the beginning it felt a bit strange—like trying to play cover songs! But I really liked the songs so I have no problem with that at all. I think that if the new line-up can add something new to the band without changing it too much it would be great. I'm looking forward to hearing the results of recording the new songs.

MRR: YOUR DEBUT LP IS OUT IN THE US ON PROFANE EXISTENCE. I THINK THIS MAKES SENSE IN A LOT OF WAYS. HOWEVER, YOUR SOUND ALSO DIFFERS A GREAT DEAL FROM THE MAJORITY OF PROFANE EXISTENCE'S BANDS. ARE YOU WORRIED KIDS MIGHT PICK UP THE RECORD OR GO SEE YOU EXPECTING SOMETHING FROM YOU THAT YOU'RE NOT?

KENKO: We're very comfortable working with Profane Existence. It's a no bullshit deal and everything is said and done in a very friendly, generous and humorous way. We are aware of the fact that we sound different than many of the other bands of that circuit, but I think the fact that we're already 2000 copies into the first pressing, three months after the release tells you that the kids are picking it up no matter what.

KRISSE: But yes, if you've never heard us and just go from our previous (or present) other bands it's easy to guess that we sound totally different, never heard anyone complain though.

MRR: SIMILARLY, DO YOU THINK THIS MIGHT DISSUADE KIDS WHO MIGHT REALLY LIKE THE RECORD FROM GETTING IT?

KENKO: From our Scandinavian perspective: No. Over here I don't even think that many people reflect much over what label stuff is released on, while I think you have more of that in the US. However, Profane has a good enough distribution, so if anyone's interested it won't be hard to find our stuff, and also—we're coming to your town to open your eyes and ears up!

MRR: BEST AND WORST SHOWS YOU'VE EVER PLAYED?

138: The best for me so far has been the Kremlin in Minneapolis on New Year's Eve 2005. Or maybe at the G8 in Bremen (that's in Germany folks!) last November. Or maybe in Philadelphia, at the 1st Unitarian Church. Or perhaps the gig at Mr. Roboto in Pittsburgh. I dunno, it's hard as fuck to just pick one. You gotta remember that I've only done about 25 gigs with Imperial Leather, and so far, knock on wood, the vast majority of them have been fucking splendid. I haven't had time to experience the true grimness of being in this band. Yet. So picking the worst shows are easy! First, there's our attempt to conquer the Köpi in Berlin. A nervous mind and a distracted soundman paved the way for a disastrous night. Second, there's our visit to Chicago, where everything sucked except the exquisite Mexican cuisine. Let's never speak of this again.

AMYL: At an earlier Köpi gig the crowd picked me up off stage and surfed me around for a song. The rest of the band kept playing the final chorus until I was placed safely back on stage. That was pretty fun.

KRISSE: For me the best show has to be the Craiova gig in Romania, we arrived after nineteen hours in the van totally fucked and just got our asses kicked by the excellent Romanian audience. This was our first big tour and to have half of the people there singing along to our songs, dancing and having a great time was just awesome. Worst show... hard to pick one, but one of those lame sober matinee shows in some small town in Sweden I guess, those are not the most fun.

MRR: ANY OTHER TOUR HORROR STORIES?

138: I'm sure the older Imperial kids have a shit load of them.

KENKO: I will never forget being asked to smuggle booze on a little ferry between Romania and Bulgaria. We had paid pretty much everyone off to be let on it and now the fucking ferry dispatcher himself just threw a box of bootleg booze at me when I was sitting in the van. I threw it back and he was mighty pissed off. We had been waiting in extreme heat for a very long time for the ferry, and then he let all the other vehicles on before us even though we were the first in line. When the ferry was full he pretended that they were leaving without us until the last moment when he waved us on, and put our van on the actual back edge, securing it only with a piece little of wood under a wheel. We finally made it, only to be stopped six times in Bulgaria by crooked cops who wanted money to let us continue.

AMYL: I swear it was like crossing the river Styx! And after you get off the ferry your vehicle needs to be "disinfected". You drive in between two pieces of metal and a little bit of spit comes out and lands on the driver's and passenger's window. This is about one Euro for each spit. It is all really funny in retrospect though. I'd do it again!

KRISSE: And after that long fucking ride though Bulgaria you end up with like small villages of trucker bars and prostitutes along the border to Greece. That was the saddest thing I've seen in my life and made everyone sick to the stomach.

DANNY: Did you know that in Bulgaria they actually have speed cameras on *every* lamppost? Or at least that's what the cops told us.

MRR: WOULD YOU RATHER PLAY A BASEMENT SHOW OR A CLUB GIG?

138: There's pros and cons to both, so I want an all-ages basement show during the day and 21+ club at night. If I'm forced to pick one then I have to go with the true old-school basement show. When you get one like the one we did in Minneapolis on New Year's Eve, nothing can top it. The energy, the sweat, the blood, the underage drinking, the chaos—gotta love it. But yeah, sometimes it *is* nice with a proper PA and monitors...

KRISSE: I'd never experienced base-

ment shows before this last US tour, but I have to say that I prefer those now, always lots of fun and chaos.

AMYL: Krisse must have been drunk when we played all those shows at the Fullersta basement in Stockholm.

MRR: AGAINST ME! RECENTLY INKED A DEAL WITH A MAJOR LABEL. THAT SHOCKED A LOT OF PEOPLE EVEN THOUGH THEY'D BEEN GETTING A BUNCH OF MAINSTREAM PRESS. NOW, LET'S PRETEND FOR A SECOND THAT I'M LIKE FUCKING SEYMOUR STEIN OR SOMETHING AND I COME UP TO YOU AFTER A SHOW. I'M GOING TO GIVE YOU COMPLETE CREATIVE CONTROL, GET YOUR SONGS OUT TO MILLIONS AND HOOK YOU UP WITH A HELL BENT FOR SCANDINAVIAN TOUR JET. WOULD YOU DO IT? WHY OR WHY NOT?

KENKO: No I wouldn't, because it's a dead end.

AMYL: No, I like the van.

138: The hardest question of them all. Sacrifice some of your hard earned integrity and "sell out" just to get the chance to expose mindless mall kids to decent music, sincere politics and a good message? Or is the medium, a.k.a. the do it yourself underground culture, in itself the actual message, and by signing that dreaded contract you actually corrupt the message? Fucked if I know. I've been pondering this question for the past ten years and I still have no straight answer. Of course, who wouldn't want to tell their boss to stand aside, quit their job and go make a living of playing punk rock? I know I would love to, and I have a really cool boss and a better work situation then most kids in the scene! On the other hand, every time I dip my toe into the major label pond, and I have to do that a lot through my work, I always come out of it with a feeling of total disrespect and utter disgust for the people working in that business. So to answer your question: Personally, I don't know what I would do.

KRISSE: No way.

MRR: NOW FOR SOME STUPID QUESTIONS! FEEL FREE TO ELABORATE. DEAD BOYS OR DEAD KENNEDYS?

138: Dead Kennedys. One of the first hardcore punk acts I discovered when I was a kid, and their records still stand the test of time. Plus, though I love Dead Boys and "Sonic Reducer" was somewhat of a teenage anthem for me, they still only managed to do one timeless classic album and one album that's "just" good. The Dead Kennedys never did one single bad record.

KENKO: Discharge.

KRISSE: Can I say Disorder?

MRR: MARK E. SMITH OR MARKY RAMONE?

138: Mark E. who? Guess I have to go with the Ramone, huh? Wait, is he the Ramone who's a conservative, far-right cat? Then fuck both of them.

KRISSE: Never been a big fan of the Fall, so I'll have to go with the Ramone.

DANNY: Mark E. Smith. I love the Fall.

AMYL: Can I say Discharge?

KENKO: No! They're mine!

MRR: THE KIDS OR THE REAL KIDS?

138: The Kids. The self-titled and *Naughty Kids* albums from 1978 are amazing, rip roaring, cranium crunching rock 'n' roll the way it's supposed to sound. To have that kinda music coming out of the musical desert that is Belgium is just plain mind-boggling. It took that country like 20 years to produce another great, kick-ass band: Dead Stop! Unfortunately I believe the Kids are still playing. Ouch.

AMYL: New Kids on the Block.

MRR: WRAPPING UP. IT'S 2006. ROCK 'N' ROLL HAS EXISTED FOR 50+ YEARS. THERE HAVE BEEN THOUSANDS OF BANDS PLAYING THE SAME COUPLE OF CHORDS FOR HALF A CENTURY. IS THERE REALLY ANYTHING LEFT TO ADD?

138: Nope, not really. All you can ever hope to do is take those three old chords and try to put a tiny, tiny spin on it. Your own identity, your own spice, add some personal flavor. Like Regulations. Or Witchcraft. Those two bands started as just a little more than cover acts, and look at them now. They are creating truly ass-pounding tunes *and* manage to have an identity of their own. Yet they are total copy-cat bands, really pushing themselves to try and imitate a certain era of music. Kudos to them. If you start a band with the intention of making something totally unique and original you *are* gonna fail. Or worse—end up being Coheed and Cambria. Teenage prog cruds must die.

AMYL: More action from all genders against sexist and homophobic bullshit!

KENKO: Discharge.

MRR: ANYTHING YOU'D LIKE TO ADD?

138: Justin, thanks a lot for the time and effort you put into this interview! See you on the US west coast tour in June. Keep an eye out for dates on www.communichaos.com/il and a new 7" EP on Profane Existence (profaneexistence.com) in time for the tour.

KENKO: Yeah, we'll be back in the US in June 2006, starting in Austin on the 11th and ending in Minneapolis on the 30th after crawling up the West Coast.

AMYL: Be there!

IMPERIAL LEATHER

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photo: jonas granvik

MAGRUDERGRIND

I have followed the more extreme side of hardcore feverishly for many years. With all this fast, brutal shit I was influenced to start a grindcore band of my own. Years passed. There were fewer and fewer grind bands. The powerviolence bands all vanished. Fastcore slowed down to a trickle of accessibility. Boring thrashcore took over. Snooze!! No blastbeats meant: shove it up your arse!

But then a band I was in played a show with a new and young band called Magrudergrind. I heard they were a grindcore band. They were setting up, these three young-looking dudes. I really had no idea what to expect from them. They announced that they were starting, and began the destruction of sound waves on which their reputation is now based. There were maybe ten heads watching, myself being one, I was floored! Fast, whirlwind blasts! Ripping and sawing axe! Grating, sick vocals! I was in love! They killed it! Stomped this old fucker like you wouldn't believe…but by now I am sure you do. After busting their asses for a few years, they have become world-renowned for their special blend of grindcore, fastcore, and a dash of powerviolence. Even after a recent lineup change, I still find myself excited not just about their music, but as cool people too. Now, let's ask the fucking questions!

Interview by Clint Nichols, a.k.a. Hello Kitty Grinder #1

MRR: Run down the lame shit first: who are you, what do you do, etc.

Avi: I'm Avi Kulawy, I'm the vocalist. I'm 20 years old. I work as a restaurant server. I get old conservative buttholes drunk and take advantage of the cheddar they've got in their wallets. I go to community college, and have been involved with Magrudergrind since the start, three and a half years.

Chris: We all live in the Washington, DC, area, and have been together for about three years. My name is Chris, I try to play drums, I work, and I ride my bike.

Maurice: I'm Maurice (Mough), I'm 25 and I play guitar. I also sing in A Warm Gun, although I've been playing guitar for a very long time, and that's mainly what I have done in bands over the years. I work at an animal hospital in PG County and I do *The Chains that Grind Us* zine.

MRR: There was recently a new face added to Magrudergrind. Let the readers know about the lineup change, and what it means for you.

Avi: Yeah, we just replaced our guitarist in January and played our first show with him on January 26 in DC. His name is Mough or Maurice (how ever you like it). He was a good friend for a long time, so when we started jamming with him it just went together like lemonade and ice tea.

Chris: Mough just started playing guitar for us, and to tell you the truth it's the most fun I have ever had playing in a band. All I have to say is that he fucking shreds, our newer songs fucking rip, and he can jump like twelve feet in the air.

Maurice: I was caught doing some really bad shit, so I'm being

Photo by Tony Lynch

blackmailed into playing for this band. Once I get the copies of those videos I'll be free to roam the world in my original form with no fear of reprisal. I shall be free—if not in body, then in spirit.

MRR: After a few years of non-stop touring across the US and around the world, what are some specific things you all have gained from that? Has it shed new light onto the DIY lifestyle?

Avi: Touring is what I look forward to the most: meeting new people, seeing new places. People out there who don't even know you, nor even met you before, will go out of their way to set up a show and do all sorts of extraordinary things for you, be it cooking you food, letting you sleep on their floors, to just being cool and lending their hospitality. I'm sure I speak for many in saying this is the great aspect of DIY culture. It fucking rules and we plan on keeping it that way!

Chris: Traveling is the best way to acquire knowledge and being in a band is the best way to do that. It's so interesting to see how other communities put on shows, treat bands, dance, and just interact with each other. Going to DIY shows and playing with DIY bands in different parts of the world is an honor and I've had some of the best times of my life doing so.

Maurice: The light it sheds is that this is truly an international community where you can travel to remote areas of this country and abroad and be embraced by like-minded people with just as much generosity and hospitality as you would receive at a friend's house. It shows how different people living in different realities can have so much in common and share so many similar ideals—you really see that the idea of segregation or nationalism or patriotism or whatever the fuck you want to call it has no meaning.

MRR: Magrudergrind has toured with Rotten Sound and World Downfall, and soon Unholy Grave, Sanity's Dawn, and Yacopsae!! Tell us a little bit about these tours with some sick grinding and speedcore bands.

Avi: Setting up and going on tours with international bands is the caviar of touring and setting shit up oneself. Spending even a week with some dudes from Japan, Germany, or Finland gives you some sweet insights into what their culture is like, and seeing them experience a different culture first-hand is awesome. Also, you get to learn some foul words in different languages and learn new tricks, like concho'ing mo-fo's (ask some Japanese dude what that is, hopefully he's cool and won't concho your ass!).

MRR: What tasty platters does Magrudergrind have in store for the future?

Avi: Right now, we're currently writing for our debut full-length LP/CD. We're still shopping for a label to release this shit, and have been talking with Six Weeks and Obscene Productions (Czech), as well as a few more, but we'll see. Also, we just confirmed a split LP/CD with FUBAR. We'll be writing for this after the full-length is written. The CD version for the split will be on Bones Brigade Records, not sure about who will release the LP as of yet. Also we're talking with Vomit For Breakfast about a split 7", which would be released on Haunted Hotel Records down the road some time.

Maurice: We're writing songs to tell off all the assholes we see at shows. I'd name names but it would take up this whole interview.

MRR: How do you feel about major label acts gaining acceptance into the DIY scene? More specifically, do you feel that metal bands playing in DIY spaces with DIY bands is harmful to those of us that thrive on a truly DIY lifestyle? There seems to be a bit of that happening in certain areas.

Avi: Once they bring their rock star, big-headed mentality into our spaces, we gotta start getting ultra-violent!

Chris: It's bullshit and those major label acts are just trying to capitalize on DIY communities. They are using our forums to play their shitty music and sell their overpriced merchandise. In all honesty, I feel that these bands have no fucking right to play our hard-to-come-by and hard-earned DIY spaces. The more we let these bands take advantage of our communities, the more these major label bands are going to be playing in them. And more major label bands playing means more assholes coming to our shows. In the end we are going to have more fights, more expensive shows, more "tech grind/metal," and it just jeopardizes the overall existence of our spaces.

Maurice: I wouldn't say it's harmful but it may be misleading, because in the end a lot of "bigger" bands had an underground/DIY origin anyway, so it's not like they're stepping into something they don't know, just something they don't really participate in. As long as hateful or ignorant ideas are not being spread then I don't really have an issue with calling out non-DIY metal bands, unless they're ripping off or taking advantage of people for their own benefit. But why the fuck would a major-label band come to the underground to rip someone off? We ain't got no money! Ha!

MRR: OK, everyone name your top five extreme hardcore (grind, powerviolence, etc.) releases of all time (DIY

Photo by Tony Lynch

Photo by Surgy

releases preferably!), and please explain why they are such an influence on you.

Avi: Not in any order… Spazz – *Sweatin' to the Oldies*…stole this shit from a corporate record store, won't say where, and was the best five-finger discount ever! Changed my life. Godstomper – Everything! I love these dudes! I can't remember which release I got first. W.H.N? – *Brutiful Fearing* is the best hardcore ever! Swallowing Shit – *Anthology*. A three-piece, extremely *punk*-influenced grind, which I'm 1000% about. Vomit For Breakfast – split w/ Emma Ho. V4B is just freakin amazing.

Chris: In no particular order, Terrorizer *World Downfall*, Phobia *Means of Existence*, Infest *Slave*, Dahmer *Dahmerized*, Assück *Anticapital*. Without going on for another page I'll just say that all of these records redefined punk, hardcore, and the term "fast music" in my life.

Maurice: 1) Brujeria – *Matando Gueros*: This release set off an even bigger hype in Latin America when it came out. I was just getting into death metal when I heard this, and it was so fast and the lyrics were so fucked up that I just *had* to get into more extreme bands. I didn't even know who was in this band until like two years later maybe. Shit, I was thirteen at the time and very impressionable, ha ha. 2) Warsore – *Open Wound*: I mean, c'mon. This band has never *ever* played a slow part, and the way they contrast the blast beats over some slow-ass guitar riffs is just so perfect. Just pure Aussie rippage. This demo is definitely a cult classic. "Cops make good targets," "Don't settle for death metal," "You rape you die." 'Nuff said. 3) Dismembered Fetus – *I Don't Feel So Fucking Good:* Just brutal. This is the soundtrack to a severe beating. I'll admit they were a pretty offensive band, but the stuff they were writing and they *way* they were writing it (musically) was not conventional. So hateful and harsh that any feeling of anger would awake inside you after hearing songs like "Forrest Gump" or "Speed's for the Weak." Don't even get me started on their following CD. One of the best grindcore bands out of the US. 4) Towpath – self-titled demo: This is one of those bands that many want to sound like, but very few can pull off. Mixing grindcore, black metal, rap, jazz, death metal, hardcore, horns, disco, gore, Satanism, etc., this is still one of the most crushing bands I have ever heard because, although the above description sounds laughable, you have to hear this to appreciate it; everything sounds so good, aesthetically and the way it was recorded. Pure evil, but at the same time pure genius. For real. 5) Entropy – *World of Disgust*: Best underground demo of all time. Untouchable. I know a lot of people are more familiar with their later material, where they get more experimental, but this first effort is all over your face. Hardcore, punk and grindcore with extremely devastating and piercing vocals (even the lower ones) is what Entropy delivers on this demo. The blast beats just sneak up on you as do some of the breakdowns, but make no mistake, this is 90% fast and fucked up. The lyrics are smart, and that just adds to the great vibe.

MRR: How do you feel about the "new wave" of powerviolence/fastcore/etc.? (I personally already hear and read *many* misuses of the term "powerviolence.") Does it bother you that a lot of heads will probably bail in light of the next HC trend?

Avi: It's fucking sweet. Tight as shit fastcore/powerviolence/fast-HC, young bands from all over, ranging from LA to Grand Rapids to Boston to Florida are popping up. Though there are many who pose hard as shit, the kids who know what's up will stay with it!

Chris: First off, I just want to say that a lot of people say that powerviolence died with the second wave, and that it was music that was being created at that time and died at that time. That's just like saying that grindcore died with Napalm Death. There are always going to be new variants of every genre of music, and I think it's fucking awesome that there are bands all over the world still playing and trying to preserve powerviolence, grindcore, fastcore, etc. Yeah, I do think a lot of people misuse the terms powerviolence and grindcore, and they do it because they think it sounds cool. Most of them are spock-haired emo kids with Locust shirts and white belts anyway. Fuck all of that—the people that are truly into and love powerviolence, grindcore, fastcore, etc., can smell a fake from a mile away.

Maurice: To say there is a "new wave" is to imply that there was only one real era of a certain genre and that whatever was not part of that era is just a rehash or imitation. Sure, there was a time when many fast hardcore bands were taking their music to new extremes, but we have to understand that it was music that had never been done before. Just because the more prominent bands came to a halt doesn't mean that during their existence there weren't younger bands maturing their ideas to continue that same sound. Besides, we aren't taking into consideration that this whole notion of a powerviolence "wave" originated in the US (followed by Japan), and that many countries no one even heard about had bands who weren't part of any "wave," and that continued to blast even after the so-called wave was over. Kids come and go. It happens everywhere: in sports, academics, etc. It's a matter of taste; if you don't dig it or can't get with it anymore then you stop participating. That's fine, but what bothers me is when people who were once involved in HC look back on it with resentment and view it as a juvenile phase that they "grew out" of. Those are the fools I expect to be talking about "waves" while they're sitting at the bar with their hipster friends and their old sXe tattoos. In my opinion there has only been one wave: metal and punk, and they started in the 1970s. It's up to us to continue that.

MRR: How do you feel about the fact that decent

grindcore, powerviolence, and fastcore bands are popping up in places other then the West Coast and Japan/worldwide? I heard the East Coast has a pretty strong armada of blasting noisy shit—any ones that you'd recommend?

Avi: There is a ton of good ones, I'm sure Chris will elaborate on what bands are popping up places, it's really cool to see this going on!

Chris: It's about fucking time! I think it's great! People are starting to realize that slow and mid-tempo shit isn't going to cut it anymore, haha. Of course there is more of that *weh weh, weedle weedle, chun wee,* artsy, "experimental" grind shit popping up, but that will just evolve into whatever trend is next. Maybe it will be neo-screamo-tech-crust-pop...hahaha. There are so many fucking great fast bands on the East Coast: A Warm Gun, Shit Dogs of War, Disease Called Man, Bail Out!, An Alarm, Drugs of Faith, Wild Stallyns, The Spark, Sick Fix, Tradition Dies Here, Chainsaw to the Face, Direct Control, Government Warning, Wasted Time, I Object, Spoonful of Vicoden, Destrux, Warzone Womyn, Terminal Youth, Fruit Salad, Positive Reinforcement, As Long As We Are All Living…, Blank Stare, Scapegoat, Born Backwards, Asshole Parade, Shitstorm, The Holy Mountain, Hombrinous Dudes, I Accuse, XbrainiaX, Morihei Ueshiba, Weekend Nachos, Loaded for Bear, Midget Parade, and Endless Blockade are just the tip of the iceberg.

Maurice: I think grindcore is one of the last true underground forms that has been able to remain underground forever. It excites me all the time to hear of and find new grind bands coming up, because you know that in most areas they are in it alone with just a few supporters. It is not uncommon for bands to have stronger support from kids around the world who seek out extreme music than from folks in their hometowns, who would rather go see some boring HC band or some nu-metal shit. I'm sure Chris and Avi already name-dropped all the good bands from around here, but just in case, my homies the Syzz or Syzslak from Philly, Heaviness of the Load from around here, Plaguewielder from Baltimore, etc.

Photo by Tony Lynch

MRR: How do you feel, individually or as a band, about the use of sexist, homophobic, and/or racist language or jokes at HC shows? 20 years of punk history, and still this shit exists…any feelings as to why?

Avi: That shit is lame-o, people defiantly joke a lot and its always out of stupidity; people have to realize they're not the only person on earth. If you want to be acting like that, move the fuck to Utah or something (just joking, ha ha!), but really, don't come to shows with that bullshit mentality!

Chris: That shit has no fucking place in any community. Unfortunately, it's still something that's not always confronted and not always talked about at shows. It's not just the bands, but the whole community that needs to continually call people out on their shit. There are so many bands out there that are apathetic to that sort of shit. Eventually those jokes turn into actions. Fortunately, people in our area are very vocal when it comes to sexism, homophobia, and racism at shows. Let's keep it that way.

Maurice: On to 30 years…but who's counting? As long as we live under capitalism, we will have to face all types of bigotry. It's part of everyday life; it's part of the status quo. So to find it in HC/punk is extremely upsetting, because we're supposed to be challenging those mainstream values; we're supposed to be fighting the status quo, rejecting it. In our community we stand for *equality* and that's one of the strongest foundations of punk. Sexism, racism, homophobia, xenophobia, etc., are just tools used by the ruling classes to create animosity and tension among people who have more in common with each other than with them.

MRR: In relation to the previous question, what are your feelings on the heaping shit-pile of sexist and homophobic gore/porno-grind?

Avi: One word: lame. But some groovy stuff (CBT) is fun to listen to occasionally and make fun of it.

Chris: I fucking hate that shit. It gives dumb, lonely, meat-headed, pathetic forms of life an excuse to use pitch-shifters and cry about the brutally mutilated and abused girlfriends they never had.

Maurice: I ain't gonna lie, I grew up with all that shit *and* death metal, so for me it was normal or even acceptable to have/see offensive imagery and language. I was fourteen or fifteen years old at the time and I was trying to get my hands on everything, and cliché as this may sound, as I started to grow up or "mature," I realized that all that stuff wasn't cool at all.

I think that's what slowly got me out of a lot of death metal, too.

MRR: Are there any political/social activists amongst the hell-bent noisemakers of Magrudergrind? If not, are there any certain issues that are fiery in your bellies?

Avi: I've got to admit, I've definitely toned down my political beliefs since we first started. Of course war fucking sucks, and Bush sucks an even bigger one. Go veggie and get drunk—if not drunk, drink more Arnold Palmers and root beer!

Chris: I'm pissed off about a lot of things. I try and focus my energy locally, stuff that's going on in my community. I also work for a peace organization.

Maurice: Well, I grew up in a so-called "third world" country, so that reality helped shape a lot of my ideals. I was more active in college than I am now, but I was a part of the International Socialist Organization, the Campaign to End the Death Penalty and other peace groups. The fact that we live under capitalism (and everything that it represents) is what bothers me, making every day a struggle or a challenge to not lose my mind with everything that is happening across the globe. The world is a shit-hole that we as humans managed to destroy—in a matter of centuries—what took billions of years to evolve. But as humans we can also get us out of this mess by working together and promoting solidarity with others. That struggle starts with taking control of the means of production. There is poverty all over the world, when there is no reason for it. We have the resources to change that, but they're just in the wrong hands. We also forget too quickly that we aren't the only living life forms on this planet and that some plant and animal species were here millions of years before we even made an appearance. They too are the victims in the name of "progress," science and technology. Co-existence is not an unrealistic goal.

MRR: Is Arnold Palmer really an unofficial fourth member of Magrudergrind? Ever challenge that old fuck to a speed match of 18? Putt-putt? Lounging poolside with ole' Arnie consists of what? Lastly, are the rumors true involving Arizona Iced Tea and their sponsorship of your next few tours?

Avi: Arnie and I go way back. People on the East Coast constantly, time and again, keep disrespecting this very important man. Learn what this shit is!!

Chris: Arnold Palmer is more of a symbol of the way we live. Hahaha–what the fuck?! The combination of iced tea and lemonade has to be one of the greatest beverages to grace our fine earth. Where did you hear these rumors from? That would be fucking amazing! Tell them to get in touch!

Maurice: Shit, I'm trying to get sponsored by Dickies. I know they sold out super hard but that's one line of clothes that is durable *and* comfortable.

MRR: If Magrudergrind was made into cute cartoon animals and entered the land of Hello Kitty and other Sanrio characters; what type of animal would each of you would look like? (You had to see this coming!)

Avi: Haha, if anyone ever bumps into Clint, tell him to show his belly to you, the question at hand will be resolved!

Chris: Knowing that you were going to ask this question, I did some research. I would be Tippy the Bear because he shreds it up on his bike.

Maurice: Well, I would be a bear without a doubt. A Kodiak, a Grizzly or a Black Bear. They are solitary animals and are generally passive, not to mention super-intelligent (ahem). They roam the earth trying to find peace of mind…

MRR: Any last words? Shout outs and shit? End words? Blah, blah, blah…

Avi: Thanks mucho to Clint for the intergalactic interview!! Thanks to *MRR*. Cheers to Eric T, Chuff Cru, and everyone out there who's helped us out! What up to the Brothel House family! Cheers to peeps in MD/DC/VA!! Look out for our tour dates, we'll make it there eventually! *Fuck it up dude*!!

Chris: Thanks for interviewing us. Check out this dude's record label, Death, Agony & Screams, and also our homie Eric's record label Torture Garden Picture Company. Thanks *MRR* for asking us to do this shit.

Maurice: Thank you Clint for the wonderful interview. The only people I ever send shout outs to are KC, Debrom, and Cindy. Oh yeah, and my boy Shawn, SDS, TxLxNxDx Crew, VA Beach Chapter, and A Warm Gun. *Saludos a todos los locos, rockeros, grindcoreros, hardcoreros, deathbangers, thrashers y torcidos en todo el mundo…en especial en Bolivia, El Salvador y Latinoamerica*. What's up to everybody I've partied with in the US and abroad! Treat working people with respect; be kind to others, and be kind to animals. And to quote Paul of the mighty Warsore, "Don't let them grind you down, let *us* do it!"

Thanks for asking me to deal out the question marks! Go see these dudes with Unholy Grave, Sanity's Dawn, and Yacopsae (and me!) this summer. If not, you really have shitty musical taste, and need to suck on an exhaust pipe! Peace through grind!

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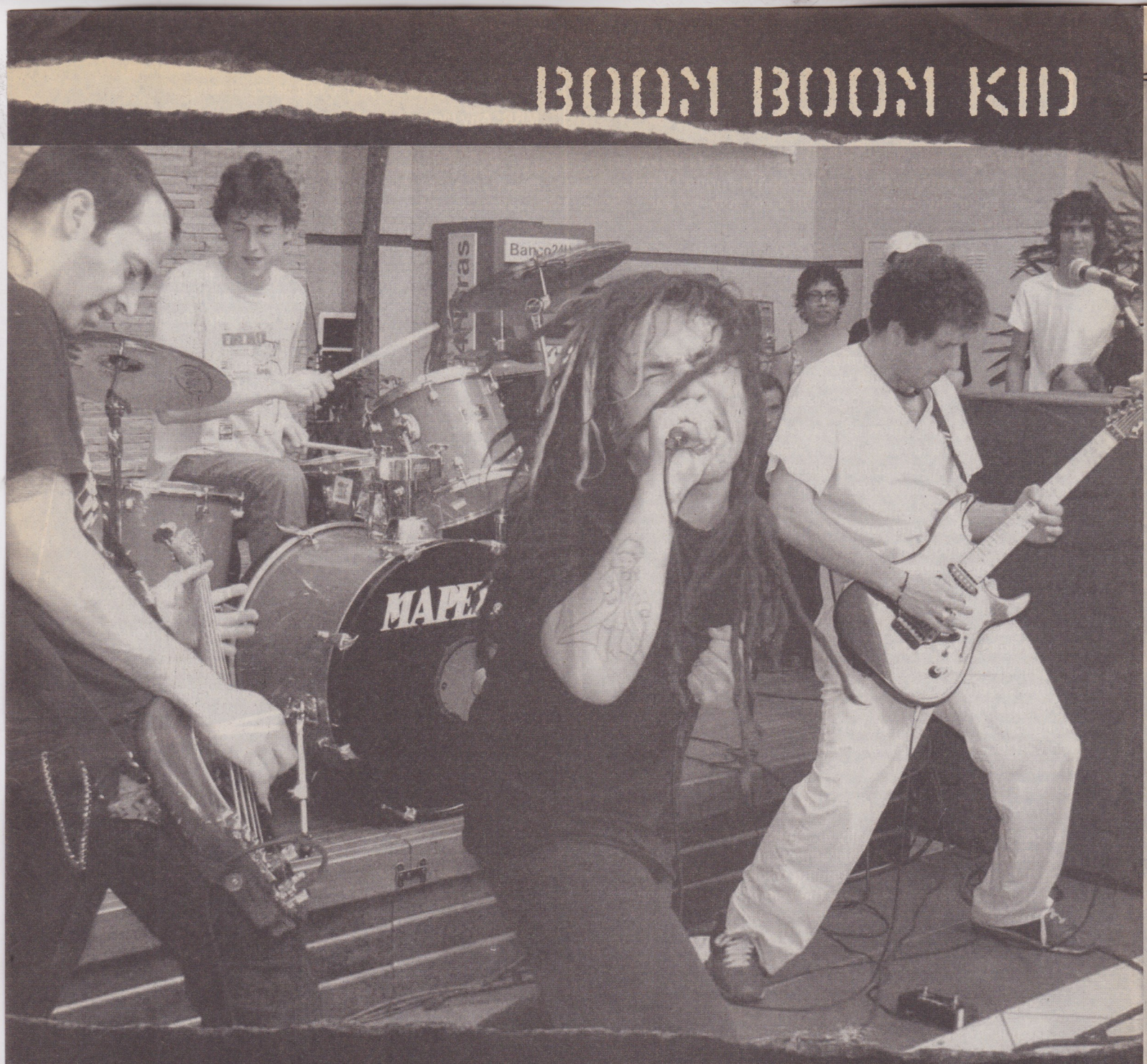
Photo by Tony Lynch

BOOM BOOM KID



I was very excited to see Nekro (a.k.a. Boom Boom Kid) perform. Last time I saw him was in the year 2000 when his old band, Fun People, was still around and I was able to catch their show in San Francisco at the Balazo Gallery. After spending two weeks with this amazing kid, getting to know him and sharing tour moments with him and the rest of the guys, I decided to do an interview and ask him some questions so the people in the USA and around the globe know a little more about Boom Boom Kid. If you have not listened to his records, make sure you get a copy!

Interview by Dudu. Pictures by Rita Gonsalves.

MRR: Tell me a bit about Boom Boom Kid, for the people who don't know about you.

Boom Boom Kid: some people know me by the name Nekro—I sung in a band called Fun People from Buenos Aires, Argentina. Right after some changes in the band I decided to stop and start something new. So I changed my name and I started this project five years ago. I have three records—*Okey Dokey Dok!* (2002), *Smiles from Chappanoland* (2004), and *The Many Many Moods* (2006)—all released on my own label. I have six or eight CD singles, a picture disc released in Europe by Sacrokaabalismo, and a 5" vinyl split with a one man band from here called El Pus. All the records are released in different areas. With this project I've toured three times in Europe, a few times through Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Mexico, and a mini-tour in the USA. I like to travel, eat vegetarian food, and watch movies from El Santo, Tintin, Truffaut, and Pee Wee Herman, sleep under a tree in the summer breeze next to the ocean, skate, drink root beer and Inka Kola, collect Twist and Yeye in 78rpm. I like to listen to the first Rabito record a couple times a day, Citizens Arrest, the killer Jerry Lee, Daniel Viglietti, Los Shackers, and JFA. I don't like to be cold but I like the snow if I have somebody to play with.

MRR: How did you feel when you came to California this past October 2005?

BBK: It was excellent! I had a good time. The shows were great, the band that traveled with me, Los Gummy Bears, was incredible pure passion and love. They treated me like a brother in Monterey just like in San Francisco. We also recorded some Ritchie Valens songs in Spanish and they turned out good. This year we'll go for more gigs and Tirili dance parties, in the control of DJ Zarpado and DJ Chaos, with veggie burritos, root beer and love!

MRR: Did you see a change in the people? Did you feel a different response from the one you got when you were in Fun People?

BBK: In reality I could not believe that there was somebody who still remembered Fun People or that knew something about BBK and I was surprised. It was very nice to go back and visit friends and make new friends and see them in the gigs dancing. The gigs are always fast and like savages, short and fun.

MRR: Do you feel a personal and a musical change from Fun People to Boom Boom Kid?

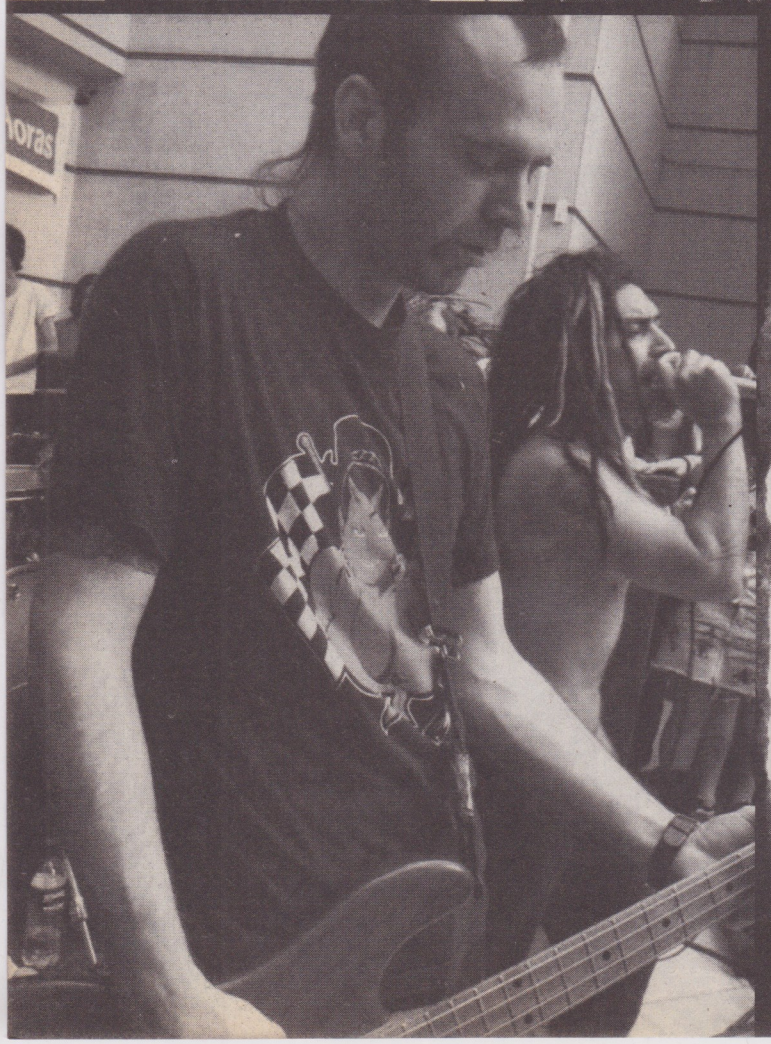
BBK: I feel more oriented to the "shinnychachacha tangopunkyenkaollieoverthehatehardcorepop." I sing about freedom, about love with happiness. I don't know. Last time I visited my doctor he prescribed me some pills, but for me music is my medicine.

MRR: What do you miss the most about the USA? Or any other country that you've been to?

BBK: I have a lot of loved ones all around where I've been and they are the best! The worst thing in this world is the racism, the hate, the borders, the wars, and the fucking money that we need to use to move in this tiny world (compared to the sun).

MRR: I know that you have a new album, *The Many Many Moods of Boom Boom Kid.* Tell me a bit about it. Is there a special song that hits your heart?

BBK: Yes! I have a new record and that's the title. It has 11 new songs and the other 25 songs are from B-sides of the singles that were released.



They are no longer available and are being sold on eBay for a high price. (Laughter.) I like them all a lot, but "Take My Hand" is my favorite to play live and it's also positive. Another is the version of "This Land Is Your Land" by Woody Guthrie, but in Spanish.

MRR: What can we expect in this new album? Is there anything special?

BBK: Yes! A lot of *fresa* songs for all the *fresa* kids of the world like me. I know that in Mexico it sounds bad to use the word *fresa* but here in the south it sounds good. They even call me "El Chico Fresa del Rock" and I like strawberries. The album is in two formats, one in a normal jewel CD case and the other one in a digipack style that includes a collage poster that I made, and also a 5" split that has one song that is not included on the CD. On the other side is El Pus, a one-man band. He is a freak, and does not eat meat. He is vegetarian and does not drink maté and dresses up in pink.

MRR: What inspires you to write songs?

BBK: I just try to put some color in my sad days. From there all the bitter, cold, cloudy and sad days come out and I fight them with songs. I resist the bad humor and I will never give up and I have not been defeated like the poet Almafuerte said.

MRR: Do you consider yourself a solo project or you are part of a band?

BBK: It is a solo project like Enrique Guzman after leaving Los Teen Tops, like Stiv Bators after Dead Boys and before Lords of the New Church. During all these years I've traveled from Buenos Aires by myself with my bags to play in different cities of the world, but I feel a part of all the bands that have traveled with me in every country I go, and any band that I've recorded with. I feel part of Zinc, Pirexia, Las Vecchias, Los Gummy Bears, Pelado, Chelo, and Cobra. They are all Boom Boom Kidz!

MRR: What are you trying to do with Boom Boom Kid?

BBK: Trying to avoid being normal because it's cruel, and sad that it makes us be part of the herd.

MRR: I know that you have a label, Ugly Records. Are you still doing the label? Any plans?

BBK: I don't have a lot of plans other than releasing my own records, and releasing records of my old band, Fun People. I think I will do a record for Hard Skin and a new record for the band Zinc from Spain as soon as I get some money. For some reason everything here seems to be slow and I am always in and out of the country. I need distros!

MRR: What do you think of DIY, Hazlo Tu Mismo. Does it mean something to you?

BBK: It is always nice when you do something on your own. It has a better taste to it and there is always a true pleasure. Do things with friends or people that share something in common and everything is more healthy and fun. I've run everything this way for years, playing shows and releasing records. And it's always a pleasure and sometimes things get out of hand when the band gets more popular but that is not my problem. I don't know if I will be popular one day, but I don't like to have

problems; I avoid them. I received offers from major labels from Argentina for a new album, but that is not what I'm looking for at the moment and it's also not the reason for this project. Just imagine that I never thought I was going to release a demo tape.

MRR: I read your book/diary and I liked it a lot. How did you get the idea of making a book with your tour diaries and art sketches?

BBK: I write and draw a lot. It's like my therapy, like dancing and singing. I've been making fanzines since I was 13 years old. I was really into fanzines before I started messing with the microphone. I have never stopped making fanzines and like them a lot, that's what I do. I'm not happy with the world we are in and writing and drawing is a way of releasing everything that bothers me. Either I do it or I become normal and that is ugly.

MRR: What do you do in your free time other than music? Do you play with your toys? Drink root beer? Draw?

BBK: I've always been skating but now I don't do it as much after the operation on my right knee, which was injured in the middle of a gig. The other knee got injured after riding a downhill with a long board and just last week I was in a pool and hurt my shoulder. But skating is really good! I hang out at night with friends, I have a few toys and I never stop playing with them. It would be stupid if I said to myself, "Okay, I'm getting too old to be playing with my toys." That is for the normal people to say, with limits. I can be home after a punk rock show and spend hours playing with my toys and for me that is normal. During the night I watch black-and-white films and listen to my 78rpm records, and if not I have my scooter. During the day I go for a ride looking for a good spot to go skate another day in the sunshine. Root beer? So sorry to say this drink does not exist here in South America, but I drink Inka Kola from Peru, which tastes like bubble gum. My life is not as fun or as easy as I describe it here, but I always keep a good humor and I look at all the positive and fun things I have left in my life.

MRR: If I visited your record player, what would I find? What are you currently listening to?

BBK: Arthur Lyman, Mariquita Gallegos, Deedee Sharp, Millie Small, Hank Williams, Devo, Limp Wrist, Break Machine, Neil Sedaka, Thor, Rita Pavone, Sweet, Massapeal, Hasil Adkins, Frankie Lymon, Radio Birdman, Los Yakis, Son House, Adrian y Los Dados Negros y Rabito.

MRR: I know you live your life day by day and you don't think about the future, but do you have any plans in mind? Tours? Fanzines? Music?

BBK: Yes! I would like to build a castle of chocolate with rivers of root beer floats, streets of pizza, and ponds of Inka Cola, a sky of ice cream with clouds of fresh fruits—a really big place and then all the hungry people can eat it till the end of days.

MRR: Thanks BBK for your time; do you want to add something? Any last words?

BBK: Yes! I would have liked that AIDS had never existed.

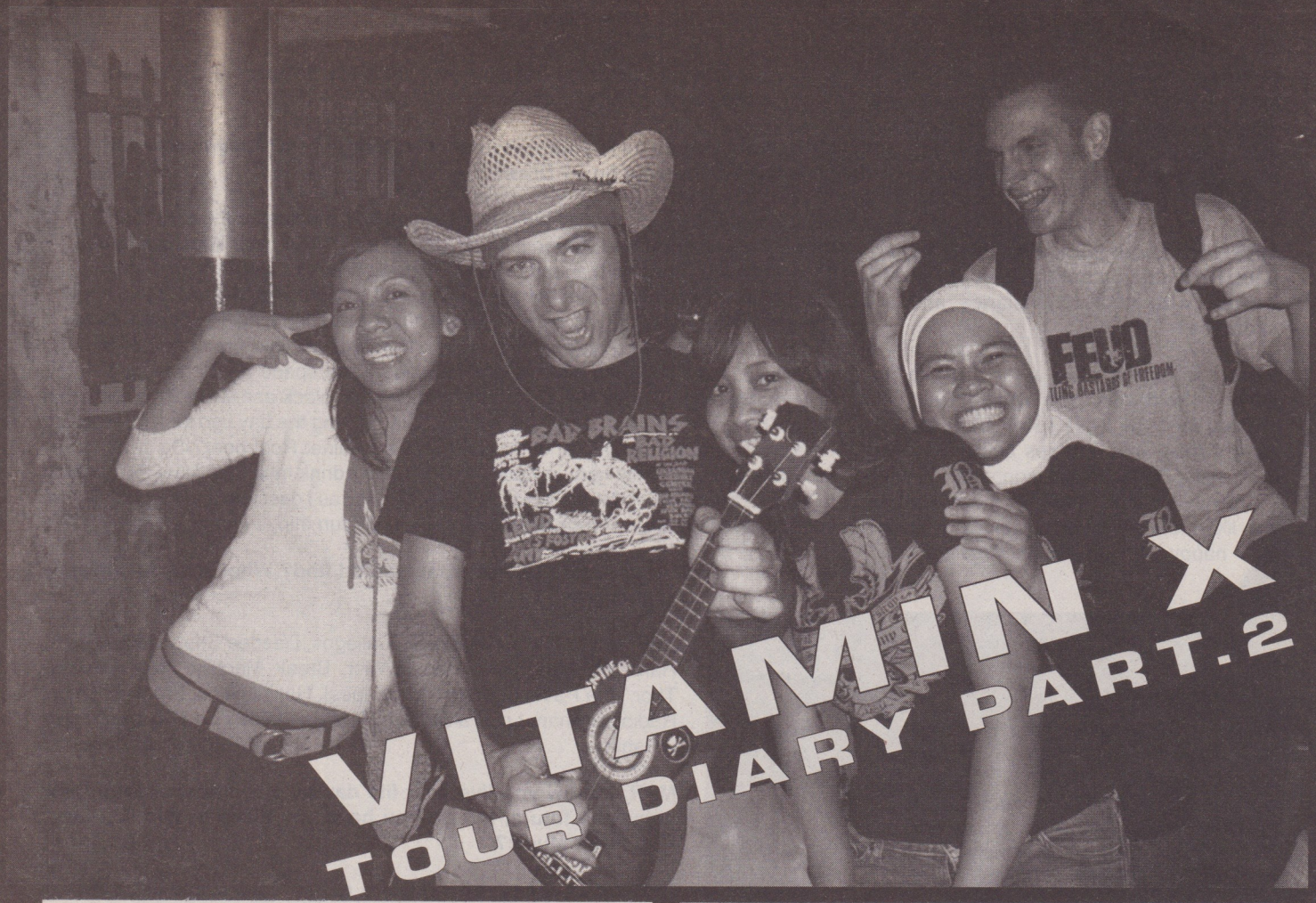
MRR: Where can the people get in touch with you? Where can we find Boom Boom Kid Records in the USA?

BBK: Sound Pollution Records has released my second album, *Smiles From Chappanoland,* and I think it is very easy to find it there in the USA. The other albums, comics, fanzines, books, and videos you can only find when I am on tour. I always take them with me. I am working on a USA tour this October 2006 so if you are interested in booking a gig write to me here or get in contact here:

chappanoland@hotmail.com

info@funpeople.com.ar

www.bbkidz.tk



VITAMIN X
TOUR DIARY PART.2

Day 12, Tokyo – Melbourne
In the morning we visit Tokyo's National Garden and feed some of the huge goldfish. The Japanese part of our tour has been a big success, and we're ready to rock on. We say goodbye to Naoki, Ichiro, and Yoshida at the airport and immediately let Marc deal with the luggage girls. I don't know if it's his haircut or something else, but once again we go through without paying anything extra, even though we are around 60–70 kilos over the limit. The flight to Melbourne is about ten hours, and despite our plans to get some sleep, we spend most of our time playing some stupid video game.

Day 13, Melbourne @ University: The van is gone
It's Tuesday, November 15, and we arrive down under at nine in the morning. We immediately feel the difference in temperature. Our welcoming committee consists of six customs officers. We have to get in a separate line and are all individually checked. Probably we're singled out because we're Dutch, which to them means drugs. I'm too tired not to be scared, but luckily they're after drugs and don't really bother discovering that we are touring band. They even ask Marko if he's playing in a band and he just says yes.

Our Aussie tour organizers Jordan and Scars pick us up and we head off to some squat where we once again reorganize our merch, which we had separated earlier to go through customs. Boka is constantly joking that we don't have enough merch, and that we should call Felix Havoc to order some more, as only 60% of our luggage is merch.

In the afternoon we go to Melbourne's most famous punk shop, Missing Link, and meet Pete, a ZZ Top-looking hardcore dude, who's been a great help during our stay in Melbourne. One of the punk kids (who just got his license and is driving for the first time ever, which we learn later) parks the van together with Marko. When we return in an hour the van is gone. Marty (a friend we know from Amsterdam) and I start running around, because Marko and the kid are not sure where they parked. Marko's sense of direction is non-existent. Panic breaks out because everybody thinks the van is stolen, and without a van there's no tour. When we are at the point of breaking down, somebody notices a big sign above our heads saying "parking prohibited." So we have to go to some police parking lot where it was towed and buy it back. Nice start of the Aussie tour.

We miss all of the opening bands because of the van trouble. We have to play in a big university hall, and half the crowd is looking at us while we put our stinky show-clothes on in a corner. The place is too big for the amount of people there, so we take the chairs that are standing on all sides, put them in a semi-circle with the drum kit in the center. We expect the crowd to break the chairs on our heads or sit down on them, but they behave very civilized and dance nicely in front of the chairs. After the show we move to the house of Georgia and friends.

Day 14, Melbourne @ The Arthouse: Mattress Mosh
We get up early and drive to Yarra Valley to visit some National Park with a bunch of wild animals. It turns out to be more of a zoo and we have only an hour before it closes, but at least we get to see koalas, kangaroos, platypi and a Tasmanian devil.

This evening's bands feature the Focus (Gang of Four meets Radio Birdman), our touring mates the New Justice Team (cool melodic hardcore with female vocal) and Anarchoi (great punk with a little crust touch, like later Oi Polloi, from who they took their name). Tonight we're in full power and even the high stage doesn't bother us. We rage through our set, but as we are putting the cherry on top of the cake with a cover of AC/DC, the crowd's response is a little reserved about a cover of one of Australia's best rock bands. From this show on we introduce the *mattress-mosh* and *mattress-diving*. (I would like the historians at *MRR* to credit VX with the origins of this phenomenon, although Felix Havoc deserves credit as well for the latter.)

One thing I didn't tell you about our Aussie tour organizers yet, is that their average age is around nineteen. They're doing their best, but their lack of experience gets us into some funny situations. After this show starts the key saga. Almost every day of the tour, the key to one of the vans is lost after the show (because as I've already mentioned before, we are touring with two other bands). This night the keys are locked in the van, but the problem is solved by calling the insurance company and getting the door opened.

Day 15, Canberra @ The Church Bar (18+): Key-saga No.2

Next morning we drive to Canberra, the official capital of Australia, which in reality is not such a big city. The show is in a sleazy pool bar with the ugliest bartender in Australia. We have a crazy pit with our good old mattress. A bunch of people come up afterwards to tell us that this was the best punk show in Canberra ever.

Straight after the show we leave for Sydney, hometown of Anarchoi and the New Justice Team, but not before another chapter of our key saga. Thankfully the key is found an hour later in somebody's back pocket, who gets to hear some nasty things about his mother...

Day 16, Sydney @ The Gaelic Theatre: This place is huge!

Around five in the morning, and a few minutes before we arrive at Jordan's place in Sydney, I wake up as the van is slowing down. I think we are there, but then I realize we're stopping because the van is making a lot of noise. Everybody jumps out, as we see smoke coming out of the front. It turns out to be water vapor when we open up the hood, which for some reason is under the front seat. As we wait for the engine to cool down, the other van returns to pick us up, because Jordan's house is just three blocks away. While we go to sleep Jordan and Dave spend the whole morning and part of the afternoon arguing with the stupid car rental place to find a solution. Being good capitalists, the rental company are trying to fuck Jordan over by making him pay for repairs. At the end of the tour the motherfuckers actually sue him for money.

When we wake up we go into town, but spend about two hours standing on one corner waiting for our guide to arrive. By the time he shows up, we have time to visit one record store and get on the subway to the gig. Holy shit, like The Wretched Ones would say, "This place is huge!" It's where bands like Turbonegro, the Hives, Dropkick Murphys, or Sick Of It All play when they tour Australia—not something for small DIY farts like us. Professional sound system, professional sound

man, damn. What the hell are we doing here? The stage is so high that you actually have to take stairs to get onto it. We have no idea what Jordan and Scars expect from this show, but hopefully they understand that we are on Havoc records and not on Epitaph. Even weirder is that Rose Tattoo are playing somewhere down the road in some bar.

With 200 people attending, the hall still looks a bit empty to me. Also playing are Anarchoi, The New Justice Team, Chaz.H.Scally (fast ska punk) and Twin City Faction, an amazing all-star Sydney band with a mix of traditional punk, hardcore, d-beat, emo, rock and all other kinds of stuff in very original way.

Anyway, I dunno if it is the mattress or something else but the show is pretty good and the crowd is wild. It is scary to see people jump off the high stage and one guy who dives off doesn't get caught and hits the floor full-on. He is unconscious for some time and people are trying to get him up. In the end they get him up, but some of his teeth keep lying on the floor. He walks up to us after the show and we are really sorry, but he says he had a real good time and it'll be fine. He must be into the whole Posi scene or something. This show was unusual, but really good.

After the show we meet a funny guy from the Philippines, who we immediately ask about the scene in Manila and what we should expect in a week. His answer is that somebody is going to try to steal our bags. What a great introduction to the Philippines.

At the back of the venue is another key drama and Jordan almost gets a heart attack. As everybody is getting more aggravated, irritated and angry, Marc walks by and nonchalantly opens the door without knowing what's going on. You should have seen the expressions on everybody's faces. It turns out that Marc was talking with some fans at front of the club as we were going through the fifth chapter of the saga.

Day 17, Penrith @ PCYC

We get up early and do the tourist thing all over Sydney together with Jo, singer for The New Justice Team. Of course we visit the Opera House and the harbor. It's sunny and hot so we decide to hit a beach for a swim. And what a great idea this is. Warm sea, the sun, big waves where Boka teaches us to body surf and watermelon. From living in a country where half the year it rains and you can visit the beach on average one week per year, Australian beaches in November seem like heaven.

When we get to the show I feel tired and sleepy. The show is in a school's sports hall in Penrith, a far suburb of Sydney. It's an all-ages show, but being 24 I'm the oldest not counting the other old farts in Vitamin X. In my experience younger audiences get more into it anyway. We again use some benches to create fake walls to push the crowd closer. Since we don't have a mattress this time, we use gymnastic cushions which we find in the back. They are quite heavy but the kids are still throwing them around and doing rolls over them. Marko shows some of his gymspastic moves and everybody is very impressed. After the show we head back to Jordan's for an after party. Lots of bongs appear and we feel as if we're back in Amsterdam. We sleep for three hours, load the van and leave for Brisbane.

Day 18, Brisbane @ The Ahima House

Since our second van broke down, we decide that we take Dave's girlfriend's car and fit the rest of tour crew into the first van. Ahead is a fifteen-hour drive north to Brisbane, which is comparable to driving from the Netherlands to southern Spain or from NYC to Florida if you like. We leave early in the morning, so it's not that hot yet; by 10 am, our European asses are frying. This van is not meant for long trips, so sitting with ten people inside gets more and more uncomfortable. I can't feel my ass anymore, there is no room to put my feet, and it's way too hot to sleep. We stop once in a while, and after eating an ice cream and drinking two cans of ginger beer I only feel relieved for about three minutes. There is an insane amount of little flies at the gas stations, and they fly into every hole you have in your body without asking permission first. So we don't stay at these stations

for long. There is nothing to see outside except for some trees and the occasional dead kangaroo on the side of the road. To make things worse our stereo dies on us. The only thing keeping me from jumping out is that we are going to go to a beach right before Brisbane.

Around four in the afternoon we arrive at the world famous Surfers' Paradise. As if the drive wasn't bad enough, just when we step out the sun is covered by clouds. Marko doesn't get in the water because the guys tell us about the sharks swimming in this area. I don't enjoy this swim as much as the one in Sydney.

We arrive quite late in Brisbane, but there are six or seven bands playing. There is a nice and friendly atmosphere with all kinds of punks from crust to youth crew. By the time we load I start feeling nauseous, so I decide to lie down and get some sleep. It's fucking loud next to our van, so I take my sleeping bag and lie down in an alley next to the venue. About an hour later two punk girls wake me up walking past me. They are very loud so I turn around to give them a nasty look, just when one of the girls squirts for a piss. The other starts screaming at me, but I feel too shitty to respond. When they walk back, they stop to ask me if I'm all right. I say yeah and fall back into my coma.

When I wake up I already hear Marc tuning up, so I run inside. Marko immediately tells me I missed a really good band called Draft Dodger. Marc again managed to get a mattress and it's an instant success. There is lots of sweat and dust flying in the circle-pits at this show. We say goodbyes to our touring crew, which is really sad, as they drive back to Sydney, while we fly out a day later back to Melbourne. We had a great time with them. They did their best and their main goal was to make us happy and satisfied with the tour, and to make sure that we had a good time and enough money from shows.

Once we are done loading, our hosts show us the way to an outside swimming pool, which was not "closed" at night. So everybody goes for a swim, as I go comatose.

Day 19, Day off: Rainforest and a four-meter-long python

Finally we have a day off, the only one we have in Australia. Together with our hosts we set off to the rainforest. After a two-hour-long drive we stop at a waterfall to take a swim. When we get to the little swimming pool, there is this crazy drunk truck-driver with his girlfriend. He climbs up the mountain slope to jump into the pool, just as two park-rangers walk by. They tell him to be cautious, but he tells them that he is a free man and he does whatever he wants. He offers us a ride to Melbourne next day, but we have to disappoint him because we are flying. Then we take off deeper into the jungle. After walking for about an hour Marc almost steps on a four-meter-long python. Everybody takes their cameras out, but Marc decides that he wants to get closer and the snake almost jumps him. Soon the snake gets pretty scared of all the attention so it turns around and glides away. Marko decides that he still wants to touch the snake, fortunately the snake doesn't sue him for harassment.

In the evening the Brisbane people cook some really nice food for us. As we are eating watermelon outside on the porch, some weird animals come down from the trees. Our hosts tell us these are wombats, that live off human waste and they come every evening to see if there's some food left for them. Our host Aaron finds a tick in his neck, but I don't give it much significance.

Before going to bed we take a swim in the swimming pool again, but my ears are hurting. Aaron tells me that it's an infection from swimming in the ocean and that he had it every summer when he was a kid.

Day 20, Melbourne @ The Arthouse: Ticks and broken ribs

We get up around 5 am to get to the airport. Marc's charm doesn't work properly this time and we end up paying $60 for having fifteen kilos extra. We get picked up from the airport by a Malaysian kid called Yeap from Aussie crust band Pisschrist, with his friend in a car. So there are six of us plus all our bags and guitars. We stuff the four of us into the back seat for an hour drive to Melbourne.

Back in the city I decide to go to a pharmacy to get antibiotics for my ear infection. I feel something stinging me under my armpit. So I scratch and feel a little lump. I lift my t-shirt to see what the fuck this is, and I see that I met a friend in the rainforest. A tick decided that it was a good idea to live in my armpit. Thankfully I see it just in time, as it is half way in. We run outside screaming, run back in to ask directions to a hospital. Our friend Marty gets the directions and we catch a cab where I'm sitting in the back holding the skin around the tick tight and sweating like a monkey. At first aid they let me in real quick and the doctor takes it out within five seconds with a piece of stitching thread and writes a prescription for my ear infection. That tick is probably the first of its species to have flown on an airplane and I sincerely hope he enjoyed the ride.

This evening's show is again in the Arthouse organized by Franca this time, and features Terror Firma and Another Way. The crowd is really wild and it's a total climax of our Aussie tour. People are more than enthusiastic, jumping around, singing along. This is definitely a great ending of the Australian part of the tour although our friend Marty breaks his ribs during the show, which he finds out about later when he starts laughing driving with us in the cab back home.

Day 21, Melbourne – Singapore: Yellow watermelons

We spend the whole morning packing at Georgia's house. I check my email and find out that our tight flight schedule through Southeast Asia has just become tighter. Our flight from Manila to Kuala Lumpur is moved from 6 a.m. to 4 p.m., which means we'll be

arriving in Malaysia at 9 p.m., while the show starts at 5 p.m. I call the air company but they tell me to go fuck myself in a friendly matter. I spend two hours behind the computer, trying to find another flight, but this is the only flight from Philippines to Kuala Lumpur. In the end I call our contacts in Malaysia and to Shaiful from Singapore who is the main organizer of our Southeast Asia shows.

We arrive at Singapore airport at 10 p.m. and get picked up by Shaiful and friends who bring us to a chalet resort with a swimming pool at the beach they have rented for us. We are totally surprised, but they tell us it's really cheap. Shaiful being one of the persons who told us many times that our Southeast Asian schedule will never work out, is giving us shit for this flight change, but we laugh it off. Shaiful's friends bring us great food, but soon we realize that we're now entering the Mecca for spicy and hot food. Marc and Marko are especially having a hard time.

For dessert we go to a nearby shop and I am totally shocked. They are selling yellow watermelons. As you might have understood from the rest of the story, I'm a sucker for watermelon, but I've never *heard of*, let alone seen, a yellow one. So I buy one and when we get back to the chalet I slice it open and show it to everyone. Our Singapore friends laugh at my ignorance, but I'm as happy as a child with a lollipop.

We are really tired so we go to sleep pretty early, while our guardian angel Shaiful is keeping away the evil spirits with his heavily distorted snores. Next morning we hear that the woman next door had complained that we had made too much noise.

Day 22, Singapore @ Warehouse: This is hot!

When we go into town we get a short introduction about how strict Singaporean society is. Marc enters the subway station eating a chocolate bar, a crime for which cops take him aside and almost arrest him. This society is clean to the point of sterility, very conservative and undemocratic. There is one ruling party who's been holding power since their independence. Many things are prohibited here, even chewing gum on the subway is not allowed: if they catch you chewing gum, you pay $500! Everybody has to carry ID cards where besides your name and date of birth they have a column for race. There are three main categories: Chinese, Malay and Indian. The Malay and Indian minorities are viciously discriminated against.

Anyway, the show is basically in a big rehearsal studio on the sixth floor of a huge warehouse. At some point before the show undercover cops dressed casually come in. Some of the kids get us out of there as soon as they see the cops. They say that people might get arrested and they don't want us to have any trouble. When we leave, we tell Shaiful to call us when shit gets sorted out with the fuzz, so we can come back and see the bands Secret Seven, Under Attack and Fallen World.

So we go for some food and after an hour they call us to tell us that the cops are gone and we have to come back immediately and play. With our full stomachs we rush back to the Warehouse. When we enter the room, lots of kids are sitting down and we immediately notice why. The studio has *no* windows or air-conditioning. When we are done setting up, Marko has already taken off his t-shirt, Boka looks like he already played a show and my balls are drifting in a hot and moist bath, which I once called my undies. It's *fucking hot*!!!

Marc and Marko are having a lot of technical difficulties which unfortunately follow us throughout the set, but the crowd goes totally insane from hearing the first dB of music. It's a great atmosphere, everybody's singing along and dancing. After half the set it starts to get so hot and musty, I feel my lungs burning and cold sweat on my arms, which is a good sign that you will faint soon. After the next two songs Marko just leaves the stage and goes outside to get some air. We finish off with a cover of Black Flag as the crowd seems to melt under the heat. We get outside and I drink two liters of water within five minutes, as I look at the puddle of sweat forming beneath me. After the show Shaiful shows us our Southeast Asia "best of" CD and it looks fucking killer. A bunch of people ask us to autograph their CD and we comply.

After maybe three hours of sleep, we go back to the airport and take our flight to Manila. We decided before the tour to travel light the last four dates, so our bags won't get lost. Our guitars, most of the merch and our personal stuff are left in Singapore, to pick up on our way back. I'm carrying one hoody, two t-shirts, two pairs of whites, eight socks, my passport and my camera.

Day 23, Manila, Philippines: Thrilla in Manila

Stepping out of the airplane in Manila is an experience in itself. The second you

get out of the terminal, there are people all around pushing you, asking if you need a cab or want to buy water or cigarettes. Thankfully, Butch is waiting for us just outside with some other friends. They get us out of the chaos into the car and onto the road, which is a total mess. For the first few minutes it seems like there are no rules on the road, everybody is just driving however and wherever they want. After some time you understand that this *is* the rule: *no rules*; no lanes, almost no traffic lights, just everybody using the horn all the time.

We go straight to a kick ass vegetarian place, where everything is dirt cheap. Before going to the gig we do some shopping at a funny bootleg market. In all four Southeast Asian countries we see some Vitamin X bootleg t-shirts, some of them even looking better the real thing. We also see flyers of our show which are inspired by the *Thrilla in Manila* Ali-Frazier fight.

The gig place is a skate park with a roof, but luckily open air from all four sides. After yesterday we've started getting a bit paranoid about temperatures at the other Southeast Asian shows. Around 500-600 people show up at our show and another 150 people decide to stay outside, because they don't want to pay to get in, according to Butch. The people standing outside tell us that they don't have the money to pay admission, but Butch is clear and says they try to do this at every show. Everybody who has ever tried to organize punk shows knows that there are always people who think themselves special and want to get in for free or for less then the door price. Later you always see lots of them

drinking a beer. There are a lot of bands playing tonight, including the legendary Feud. One other band that leaves a big impression on me is an all female four-piece called Choce Cocoi (check them out on MySpace). They play fast HC with a bit of crossover and do a brilliant cover of Dutch living legends Seein Red.

Lots of kids that have been writing us months in advance come up to us to meet and get a picture with us. We start feeling more and more like rock-stars. When we are playing one kid comes up to me and asks me if he can have my bandana. When I tell him I need it for the show, he gets pissed off but later thanks me for playing the show. When we start, people are all around us, so Boka has to push people away from between him and our little amps. We have a massive circle-pit of hundreds of people going on. We have people diving of the skate ramps. For us it's fucking difficult to move, because people are so close to us and there's a lot of pushing going on. Now we know why they call this a *Thrilla in Manila!* It's really intense and we have a great but stressful time. Marc and I get into an argument after the show about whether or not we should have played our oldest song, "sXe Crew," because it was once covered on a demo by Feud. But before it escalates we get overrun by people wanting to take a picture with us and have our CD autographed. It makes me feel like the worst kind of rock star, but who am I to tell these people what not to do.

Day 24, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia @ Paul's place: Mobbed by fans

We spend this saturday morning going around Manila, but I'm uneasy about whether we'll get to show on time tonight as we will arrive around nine in the evening. I sleep during the flight, but we have to sprint off the airplane. A car is waiting for us so we jump in and the kids drive like mad. By the time we get to the show all the six opening bands including Mass Separation, Young and Dangerous, and Dead Symphony have finished.

Hundreds of people are standing outside waiting for us. So we run upstairs to the show hall with all our stuff. When we enter, the hall is totally full with 500 people and when they spot us a great roar and applause goes up. This makes us freeze up and look around to see what people are cheering for, but everybody is looking at us. I wish somebody had put that on film. Some guys make a path through the crowd so we can walk to the stage. It's totally like the Rolling Stones are going to play and not Vitamin X. After we finally reach the stage, everybody starts taking photos of us and asking for autographs. It is getting to be too much at some moments, but on the other hand it's a great experience. Boka has special plastic glass protection around his drums (which is a vintage 1971 drum kit, only 25 ever made and used by Deep Purple! Wow!) so people can't spit at him or touch the drums.

So we set up in ten minutes and play one of our best shows ever. There are so many people on stage taking pictures and filming or just plain dancing and singing along that we have to ask everybody to get off stage after almost every song. They comply for the moment, but get right back on when the music starts. Everybody is grabbing the microphone to sing along and I'm not shitting you if there are 200 kids singing along to most of our songs. There is a constant stream of stage divers throughout the whole show. Immediately after the show we're mobbed by fans, and each of us gets another 1000 photos taken, cause literally everybody wants to be in a picture with us and I sign probably 100 of our CDs.

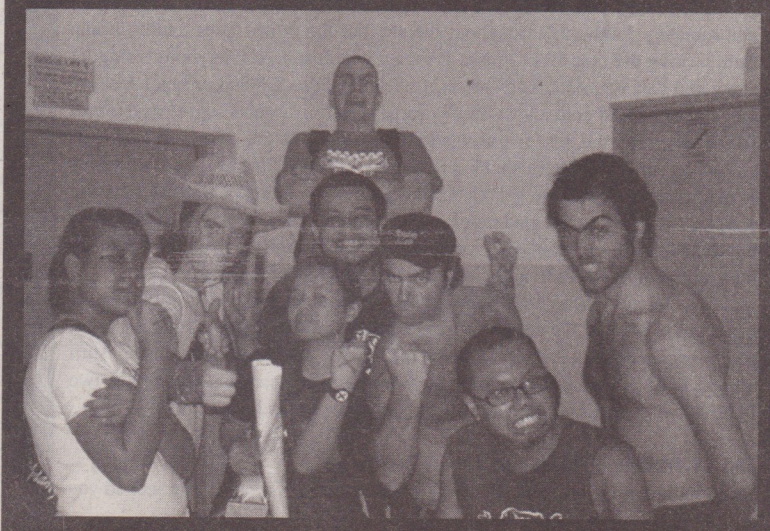
One interesting thing about this show (as well as the shows in Singapore and Indonesia) is that there are a lot of girls wearing the traditional Islamic headscarf, the hijab. These girls rock, stage-diving, going crazy like everybody else. One of them is even wearing a straight edge t-shirt beneath the headscarf. With all the lies about the "Clash of Civilizations" we've been fed in the West the last couple of years, this seemed a perfect refutation of that simple stereotype: girls into Western music and hardcore punk, having no problems with wearing a hijab showing their religious beliefs.

After the show we go around Kuala Lumpur to see the city. The interesting thing is that Malaysia as an Islamic country is pretty open-minded and democratic, though we still have to laugh at signs reading, "Say no to porn" at public places like toll-booths.

Day 25, Jakarta, Indonesia: Vitamin X belt buckles

After three hours of sleep we get back into the car, say good-bye to our new friends and drive to the airport to catch the plane to Jakarta, Indonesia for our last show of 2005. We're picked up by Ega and friends and we go straight to the show hall. By 11 o'clock in the morning there are already hundreds of punks waiting. The show hall is a big, fancy place which Ega rented. Inside I see some kids breaking a huge ancient looking vase, but Ega tells me not too worry because "the police has been taken care of." We decide that since the show hasn't even started we should get some sleep and we end up in some cheap hotel around the block. We tell the organizers to wake us up in time for us to see one or two of the bands opening for us. When they do wake us up, it is already time for us to play and all the bands including Train in Vain, Steinkopf, and Dirty Mouth are already finished. Shit, we even miss some bands playing Vitamin X covers.

When we get to the show there are several hundred of people hanging outside, half-blocking the road. The organization has emptied the venue so we can set up and check the sound. Within five minutes Ega comes running to the stage telling us that we should hurry up, because the crowd is "getting excited outside the doors," as he phrased it. So we tell



him we need another ten minutes and he runs back downstairs. Before the time is up, we hear a noise coming from the entrance and a huge stream of people is pouring inside. One of the first people in is Ega, who screams to us: "They broke down the door. You have to play *now*!" Marc barely has time to put on his trademark cowboy hat; Marko is just staring into the crowd, around a thousand strong. I try to take pictures of the enormous crowd and Boka is trying to get the lights turned off him. In the meantime some dudes get on the mic to calm people down and introduce us MC5-style. The people are ready to testify and total mayhem erupts when we play our intro.

The show is really wild and just as in Singapore there are too many people inside. So after three songs I'm completely wet with sweat and oxygen is hard to come by. People are passing out and fainting. Ega and friends try to protect the stage but this human tidal wave swarms the stage every second of the show, making it even harder to play.

When the crowd shouts for encores we decide to play another four songs. After the first one, Boka tells me he just can't do it, he doesn't "have any power left," like Scotty to Captain Kirk. I tell Marc we can only play one more and he gets angry cause we just said four songs. Then he takes a look at Boka and the discussion is over. After the show I squeeze my T-shirt only to see two litres of sweat pour out onto the street. Japanese photographer Ayumi, who is doing an article about the punk scene in Indonesia, tells me that this is the craziest show she has ever seen in her life and I have to agree. According to Boka the temperature inside was around 50 degrees (Celsius), and I guess he knows coming from Brazil. After the show we hear that the singer of an Indonesian band died in this venue because of the heat just a month before our show… I'm happy they didn't tell us that before the show, ha.

There are probably 1000 people at this show and many of them want us to be in a picture with them. When the organizers count all the money, they come to me with an envelope and say, "Here is a million and four hundred thousand." I can't believe my ears, so I ask again, but it is true; Vitamin X have become millionaires after playing one show in Indonesia!!

"HERE IS A MILLION AND FOUR HUNDRED THOUSAND." I CAN'T BELIEVE MY EARS, SO I ASK AGAIN, BUT IT IS TRUE; VITAMIN X HAVE BECOME MILLIONAIRES AFTER PLAYING ONE SHOW IN INDONESIA!!

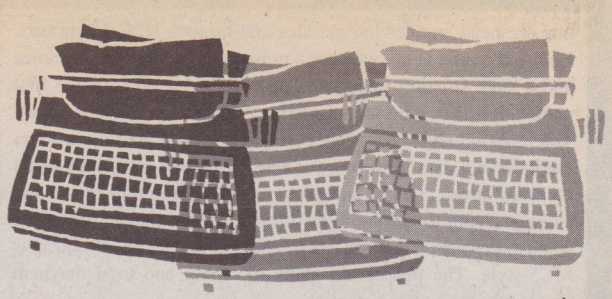
The Indonesian kids know a lot about the international punk hardcore scene. But the funny thing is that there are almost no punk record stores where you can buy records or CDs. So they download a lot, trade with friends or buy from distros at the shows who mainly sell tapes and (unofficial) CDs. We visit some houses of punk fans, some of them actually living close to the jungle, and they have photocopies of LPs, band photos, and show flyers on the wall. There are also other things that culture-shock me. A lot of bands don't own musical instruments, so they can only practice at a studio that rents instruments. When those bands have shows, they need to borrow the instruments from the venue or from other bands. But the dedication that these kids have is huge.

We spend another two days in Indonesia just relaxing, seeing beautiful sights and visiting a rainforest this time without ticks. To convince you of our riches I'll tell you one more story, about our last day in Jakarta. After buying myself a Rolex and Gucci sunglasses, we are walking down the street. On the corner there is a dude selling all kinds of music related stuff like t-shirts, belts and caps. Marko comes running to me and says that I'm not going to believe this. He takes me to a stand in front of this shop, points at the belt section and goes "Look!" First I don't see anything special, the usual Metallica/NOFX/skull belts. Then something catches my eyes, but I think that I'm finally hallucinating. So I look again and it's lying there. It's a *Vitamin X belt buckle*!!! Maybe this is business Felix Havoc should look into: Vitamin X belt buckles! It's so unreal that I pinch myself and pay two euros for a bootleg belt of my own band, standing in the middle of Jakarta. This tour is an absolute dream come true. I don't want to go home, but they push me onto the airplane and I spend 25 hours traveling back to Amsterdam; I don't live anymore in this rock star fantasy.

This tour has been more than a great experience; Japan was amazing, Australia kicked ass, and the four Southeast Asian countries were just incredible. These countries are so-called third-world countries but our shows and our stay were perfectly organized. From the financial point of view, we of course didn't make any money, but we actually *did* manage to break even, which was a big surprise for all of us! So, eight months of planning, arguing, discussing, writing, quarrelling, and breaking our backs carrying a shit load of merch was definitely worth it. This again proves the strength of the global DIY scene. Last but not the least, thanks to everybody who helped us on this tour, because without your help this trip would never have happened!

xvitaminxx@yahoo.com

BOOKS



Anarchist Voices
Paul Avrich,
574 pages • $28.00
AK Press
674-A 23rd Street
Oakland, CA 94612-1163
www.akpress.org

I cannot emphasize enough how highly I recommend Paul Avrich's *Anarchist Voices: An Oral History of Anarchism in America.* This book is a fascinating collection of 180 interviews conducted by Avrich over three decades. I was saddened to hear that Avrich passed away this past February, but he has left us with an invaluable body of work. The people interviewed include anarchists as well as friends and relatives. One of the reasons I find this book so important is the fact that many of the interviewees were of considerably advanced age when interviewed, so many of these recollections would have been lost were it not for Avrich's work. Much of the material in this collection focuses on personal aspects of the people discussed, giving a human context to the politics and history.

Part one—"Pioneers"—covers a range of perspectives, including individualist anarchism, mutualist anarchism, collectivist anarchism, communist anarchism, and syndicalist anarchism. Many of the interviews in this section are with children of important figures of turn-of-the-century American radicalism. Interestingly, while many of the anarchists active during the heyday of anarchist agitation maintained their beliefs throughout their lives, the majority of children of anarchists did not identify themselves as anarchists. There is often a gossipy feel as those interviewed recount their impressions of their parents' contemporaries and the opinions of their parents of these people.

Part two focuses on Emma Goldman and the accounts here are often personal. It seems clear that people reacted very strongly to her, whether positively or negatively. While many admire her strength and passion and skill as a speaker, she is also described as intimidating and abrasive. Much is made of her appearance, by far more than that of any man discussed in the book, and she is often described as unattractive. Many also describe her as sexually voracious, which also seems to be more of an issue for her than for her male peers.

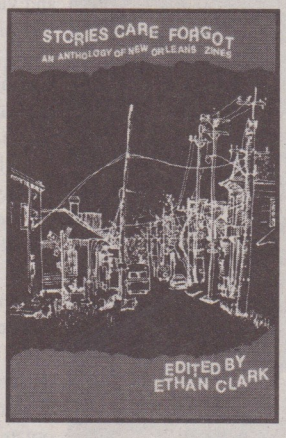
Sacco and Vanzetti are the subject of part three. While their case was a huge focus of mobilization for radicals in 1920s America and garnered international attention, the interviews in this section display the character of each of these men in depth. Both were considered quiet and gentle, and also devoted to the revolutionary ideal. Family, friends, and neighbors remember both Sacco and Vanzetti with high regard and by most accounts they had a great deal of support in their community. Sacco is described as quiet, skilled in his trade, and very much in love with his wife. Vanzetti was known as a poetic and intelligent bachelor. Most interviewed cannot imagine either man capable of the crime for which both were executed, although some do believe either one or both to be involved in some way.

Section four—"Schools and Colonies"—is an absorbing look at libertarian schools and anarchist colonies. There is extensive coverage of the modern schools / colonies at Stelton, New Jersey and Mohegan, New York. Interestingly, despite the emphasis on freedom and spontaneity, many of those who attended the Stelton school recount that Aunty Ferm, one of the most prominent teachers there, was stridently anti-sex, discouraged reading, and had a bold authoritarian streak. Still, she is often remembered fondly as well. Such seems to be the case with the modern school experience in general—many have warm memories of their time at the colonies, but clearly there are problematic aspects. Personal conflicts and broken relationships are often cited as sources of tension. Also, time and time again, communists are credited with the downfall of these anarchist social experiments.

"Ethnic Anarchists" is the fifth section, and covers the contributions of Jewish, Russian, Spanish, and Chinese anarchists. The section further emphasizes the vital and prominent role immigrants played in American radical history. I was impressed be the longevity of many of the foreign language papers which flourished at the start of the 20th century. The array of activities that people threw themselves into while enduring often-harsh working and living conditions is inspiring.

The final section—"The '20s and After"—discusses circumstances which have led to the decline of anarchism in America, such as restricted immigration and the assimilation of children of immigrant anarchists into mainstream society. Also addressed is the shift from worker-based radicalism to intellectual focus on anarchism. Yet, it's still heartening that those interviewed recognize the dangers and oppressive nature of state-ism and it's concentration of wealth and power and that they maintain faith in a better future that prioritizes freedom.

—Tress



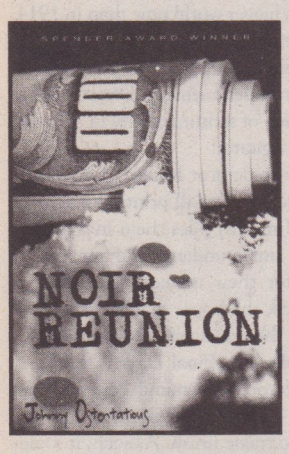
Stories Care Forgot: An Anthology of New Orleans Zines
Edited by Ethan Clark
149 pages • $14.95
Last Gasp
777 Florida St.
San Francisco, CA 94110
www.lastgasp.com

Awesome book! Reading the wide selection of snippets from various New Orleans zines, I really got a sense of the amazing underground punk and DIY community that exists there and that created this intelligent and heartfelt work. I've never been to New Orleans, always kind of wanted to but never knew too much about it. This book taught me a bit about issues and goings on there such as gentrification, the city being a 24-hour insane party town, bike delivery as a huge job, collectively owned warehouses that exist there, etc. These personal accounts are especially relevant now after Hurricane Katrina, with so many unanswered questions about the city's future. But it seems like with the efforts of true do-it-yourselfers like this book's contributors, there truly is hope for New Orleans. So many people love this city despite its problems; in a way they love it because of its problems too. So many people have awesome memories

there—no way can they just walk away. Even though I've never experienced New Orleans, I felt a deep connection to it and to the people there by reading this book. I don't want the city to be redone into a whitewashed, super commercial tourist playground. I want it to keep its old, somewhat scruffy identity. That's the real New Orleans, and that's the New Orleans that this book celebrates.

This book is beautiful and very professionally done in its scrappy, fun way. There are so many talented writers and artists here doing unique things and being brutally honest about their everyday lives and experiences in NOLA. Especially awesome is the fact that all royalties from the sale of the book are being donated to The People's Hurricane Relief Fund, which aims to make hurricane relief a grassroots effort in which those most affected by Katrina can take part, and Plan B: The New Orleans Community Bike Project, a non-profit organization that helps people fix and learn about bikes and encourages bike riding in the city.

—Jane Ghotlos



Noir Reunion
Johnny Ostentatious
216 pages • $10
Active Bladder
PO Box 24607
Philadelphia, PA 19111

Two years ago in this very magazine I reviewed Johnny Ostentatious' first novel, *Ian Hahn: The Olfactory Empath.* This, his second book, was finished before *Ian Hahn* was published, and oddly enough, it's a much better written book, even though he hadn't received feedback from his first book yet. This book proves that he's one of the new breed of talented novelists who came up through '80s and '90s punk, along with Charles Romalotti, Richard Turgeon, and Michael Muhammad Knight.

Like his first book, *Noir Reunion* is set mostly in Philadelphia and contains seedy underworld figures, bizarre set-ups that work, and likable characters. Briefly, four people who went to high school together meet up to recover four million dollars in cash, which they had hid 20 years before. Add in various animals (including a seal), crooked cops, porn magnates, heiresses, upbeat sex scenes, brutal sex scenes, and high-powered sniper rifles and you've got the enjoyable, well-written *Noir Reunion.*

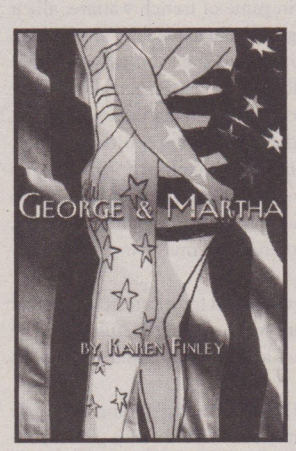
Ostentatious' pacing and action flows well throughout the book, and the characters' dialogue is natural-sounding (unlike in parts of his first book). Most of the characters are well developed, though it would've been nice if the author had spent more time fleshing some of them out. One of the highlights was his effortless inclusion of a sexually active gay character (complete with seduction scene) whose sexuality was pretty non-essential to the story line. The character's homosexuality was presented in the same matter-of-fact way that the heterosexuality was presented in the story line: as perfectly normal. Another nice touch was the narration from one of the animals in the story. It's completely unexpected and only happens once, but it adds to the drama of the scene and added a bizarrely fitting "aww" moment to the book.

This isn't a perfect book—some of the plot developments are clunky, especially in the first few pages. It's as if he worked on these pages over and over again and finally just threw up his hands and got on with writing the rest of the book, intending to return to them but never finding the time to do so. It's a shame because one could make a case for completely rewriting some of the first chapters (chapters are often just two pages long) with smoother plot development.

More tellingly, there are some jarring examples of *deus ex machina* (Latin for "god from the machine"). If you're not remembering your high school English lit class, *deus ex machina* occurs when an unexpected plot development resolves a tough situation, often with little or no relation to the plot or to probability. A classic example is the arrival of the cavalry at the last possible minute, just as the redskins are breaking down the walls to the besieged fort. Ostentatious' first novel had many more of them, but it's a problem that I hope is corrected by his third novel. Too many action writers depend on some lucky break to get their characters out of a bad situation and it strikes me as kind of lazy. Ostentatious runs his own publishing company, so he's definitely not lazy—maybe working backwards from a solution to a situation would be a better way to get characters out of tight spots? I'm not a fiction writer so I'm not clear on different ways to assemble a novel. (Unfortunately for writers, those who can't can still critique!) The couple incidents of *deus ex machina* don't ruin the book, but they rob the reader of whatever clever solution Ostentatious would've come up with, which, considering the imagination with which he writes, would've surely been real doozies!

Noir Reunion is a much fuller, more satisfying read than Ostentatious' first book—almost doubling the page count gives him much more space to stretch out his descriptions and fill in his characters. While the book is very fast-paced, the length gives him the leisure to fill out seemingly extraneous details and add stylish flair galore. Because of the amount of fine detail here, it's never clear what piece of information will be integral to the plot's evolution. Witty, frantic, peculiar, violent, sexy, funny, and Philly...what else do you want from a good punk rock summer book? Two thumbs up for this sophomore novel. Here's to the third one in a couple of years!

—Jesse Luscious



George & Martha
Karen Finley
105 pages • $15
Verso Books
www.versobooks.com

Envision George W. Bush and Martha Stewart involved in a romantic affair. You don't need to visualize it, just imagine what could happen when you put the dim-witted leader of the free world in a hotel room with the world's most famous homemaker under the context of them being long-term lovers.

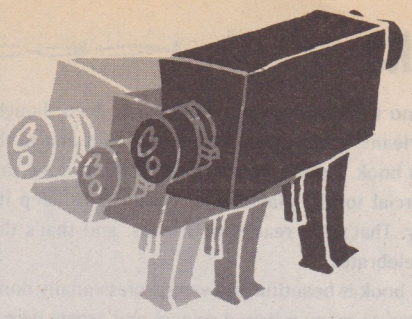
Karen Finley thought long and hard about what might happen in this circumstance. And while the situation itself has great potential for comedy, Finley inserts a heavy dose of psychology into her book, making it a very thoughtful analysis of the two icons and how they might relate. The greatest symbol of nepotism-gone-bad can yield a lot to the mother of all mothers, and vice versa.

The entire book takes place in a hotel room over the course of one weekend prior to Martha being sent to jail. He has the war on terror to worry about and she has the threat of prison with which to contend. Throw in his impotence and her need to satisfy all those around her and you get a very curious situation.

George & Martha reads like a two-person play and, indeed, was one before being adapted into prose format. Without giving too much away, Martha nurtures our Commander-in-Chief both maternally and sexually while he bumbles through the psychosis of being an obtuse President with mommy and daddy issues. The more Martha fosters him the further he digresses until he is eventually baby-wiped clean on a rubber sheet. But do not let the absurdity fool you, this is an intelligent and well-developed study of two key American figures and a very creative stab at the conversations they might share.

—Craigums

MOVIES



FINAL CUT BY STEVEN SPINALI

PRAISE THE LORD, AND PASS THE AMMO

Even as the yearly Oscar broadcast becomes increasingly unwatchable (Jon Stewart can only go so far to keep this boat from doing a *Titanic*), the nominees for foreign film almost always turn out to be interesting. Certainly the strangest story is one of the more familiar, dramatized in **Joyeux Noel**.

During the first Christmas of World War I—or so the oft-told tale goes—troops from both sides were engaging in a no-win game of trench warfare, albeit as is often the case, the individuals doing the fighting are agreeable, upstanding, and (at least in this case) Christian fellows who jump to their duties with either excitement or resolve. Scots Jonathan and William (Steven Robertson, Robert Laing) are a-spring with delight at the mere thought of leaving dreary Glasgow, while their pastor and father (Gary Lewis) joins the fight to offer spiritual support. Meanwhile, direct from the limelight of the Berlin stage, Nikolous Sprink (Benno Furrman) decides not to exercise his options as a widely known operatic tenor to fight at the front lines, though he's more resigned to his patriotic fate. His lover, the even more famous Danish soprano Anna Sorensen (Anna Kruger) can only despair.

It's Christmas Eve, 1914, and both German and Allied forces are cowed under a melancholy that mixed a desire to get home with memories of the Yuletide. The rules of warfare were understood, but appreciated as rules that could perhaps be bent for Christmas.

In this post-9/11 world, the notion of civilized Christians going to battle against the unsaved hits home for some, even if it has more to do with global control of oil. The "us" and "them" aspect of conflict is even easier for people to handle when your enemy speaks a decidedly un-European tongue and lives in a way that, at times, is incomprehensible to a Western mind set. But during those first days of the Great War, we basically had a war of European Christians versus other European Christians.

So, in a gesture of Christmas spirit, the Germans propped a line of tipped trees along their trench—a gesture that first was interpreted as the perverse prelude to a German offensive, recalling the Shakespeare's story of Birnamwood and Dunsinaine. (These days, something like that would be enough to shoot a smart bomb, which would predictably miss its target.) But these were tiny trees and didn't seem to be going anywhere.

That extraordinary Christmas truce of 1914 is legend, and all might have been lost if not for the tenor Sprink, who started things off by singing carols to the troops. The weepy Scots brought out their bagpipers (yes, the kind of war when some forces actually brought their musical instruments into battle), and returned the gesture. Finally, representatives from both sides met on the battlefield and called for a short truce, it being the holidays and all, though the ramifications of their agreement wasn't clear to either side until much later.

Not everyone found instant friendship with the enemy. When a Scot loses his friend to sniper fire, he guards the freezing body like a mother tending a dead child. One of these Germans killed his friend, and so far as he's concerned, there's no forgiveness.

For the others, Christmas is almost an excuse from war. They break out bars of chocolate and bottles of champagne, and the bilingual folk (mostly German officers) even have conversations with their enemy. But then, in a melancholy extension of their truce (and being civilized Europeans), they allowed additional time to bury their dead (who had been unceremoniously turning to ice in the field).

There is, then, a certain amount of deft storytelling mixed in with the actual events, and in its details, the carefully manicured plot sometimes seems less believable for that very reason. Director Christian Carion's approach owes perhaps too much to feel-good filmmaking. Or maybe the events here are just too hard for a 21st century mind to grapple with. It's a bigger world now than in 1914, and Christmas doesn't have the authority it once did.

Let's move forward a few years to a new war and a new film. The title, **Sophie Scholl: The Final Days**, summarizes the film's grim denouement. Director Marc Rothemund has stripped his story of every last trace of sentimentality in showing the last day in the life of the legendary anti-Nazi agitator.

Sophie Scholl (Julia Jentsch) is a psychology student at Munich University, but has a secret life. In her apartment, which also has a small printing machine, she busily types away as brother Hans (Fabian Hinrichs) piles them in a leather case. They're members of the White Rose, a small underground movement fomenting dissent against the Third Reich after their momentous defeat at Stalingrad. Somewhat naïve but deeply committed, she hopes that the truth will ignite a wave of youthful protest that might turn the tide against Nazis.

Almost like a police procedural, **Sophie Scholl: The Final Days** is the latest of several feature films on the subject, but director Rothemund benefits from newly released East German documents that, in typically German fashion, describe her entire tale in great detail from start to tragic finish. As such, it sometimes has an almost documentary feel (not unlike last year's Academy nominee from Germany, **Downfall**). There are times you almost feel like the actors are reading from documents—which, of course, they almost are. This reconstruction of Scholl's final day is about as close we'll get in a film to the actual truth.

After littering the campus with flyers, a janitor apprehends her and she's sent to the Gestapo office of criminologist Robert Mohr (Alexander Heid). Relentless and sharp-witted, Mohr is unable to penetrate Scholl's almost monolithic set of alibis and consistency, and she keeps her cool as if she were guilty of nothing. She almost gets away with it.

When Mohr meticulously dissects her testimony for flaws, Sophic Scholl finally admits her role. That's just the beginning, of course; Mohr pushes for the identities of other White Rose members, and—in a rare show of humanity—offers her release for the information. Since the other members are already under interrogation, he has little to gain aside from saving a young girl's life. Scholl refuses.

Now in a cell, she gains the sympathy of a fellow cellmate (Johanna Gastdorf) who offers a little advice, some comfort, and company for the sleepless Scholl. It's one small consolation for a girl who's suddenly in the control of a police state that, at this stage of the war, sees her as a threat—and a potential example.

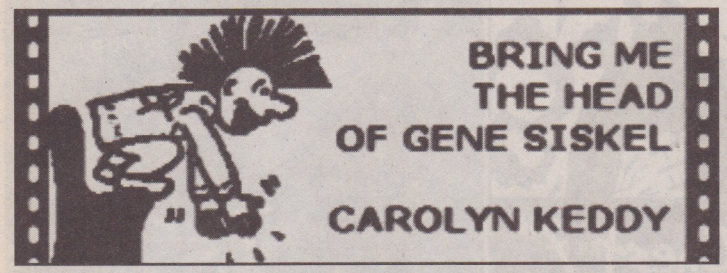
The film is gripping and sad, and there's scarcely a moment when you don't sense the legacy of Sophie Scholl supporting the drama.

Equally intense, but clearly fictional, is **Tsotsi**, the winner of this year's foreign film award. Directed by Gavin Hood, it tells the story of a smalltime gangster ("tsotsi" translates to "thug") whose two pals ride the trains to rob passengers. The title character (Presley Chweneyagae) hides behind a hood, and after finding his mark in a crowded train, stabs him with an ice pick. Even Tsotsi's friends are appalled, but in his desperately poor world, friends are almost family. "Almost" because he has so much pent-up anger that they might be his next victim.

His past, told in flashback, is almost as brutal. His mother was a bedridden victim of AIDS, and his violent father refused him all contact with her. He found his way to the streets, where piled ceramic sewer pipes substituted for home. His dialog is nearly entirely in Tsotsi-Taal, a polyglot that lends the main character's story added dimension.

Later, Tsotsi hijacks and shoots the woman driver. As he rides off, he hears a baby's crying in the back, which causes this untrained driver to veer off the road. This child, whom he keeps in a shopping bag, is a link to his past he can't ignore. He locks himself in his shack, which is taking on an increasingly bad smell; this is the first step in the long path to his redemption.

The film's saturated colors and incessant Kwaito street music offer their own excitement. **Tsotsi** is a gorgeous film just to look at, even in some of its roughest moments, and nearly always compelling.



You can learn a few things about the movie you are about to see by getting to the theater early and checking out whom else came to see the film. When I saw **The Outsider**, there were five people beside myself there. All the others were male and, like myself, had come alone. That is pretty unusual. There will always be a few loners, but mostly people go to a film with a friend. After the film started two girls showed up together throwing off the balance.

The Outsider tells the story of filmmaker James Toback who has been offered financing for his next film if he can shoot it in twelve days. Toback points out that most movies use sixty to eighty days for shooting, but he isn't deterred. Fortunately for Toback he knows a lot of famous people who will appear in his film.

The Outsider takes place during the shooting of Toback's latest film **When Will I Be Loved**. Although I haven't seen it, it appears to be the story of a younger woman experimenting sexually. The first scene of the film shows the main character, played by Neve Campbell, taking a shower. The camera starts on her face as water pours on it, then pans down her naked body. The camera cuts to a long shot to reveal that although she is taking a shower there is no shower curtain or even bathtub or shower stall. She is just standing in a wooden room naked with water running over her. When asked why she has to be naked in the first scene, Campbell gives some excuse for it showing an important introduction to her character. All I can think is another middle-aged man is making a movie and just wants to see a beautiful woman naked. That's okay with me, but let's stop pretending it is something other than that.

If that were all that was there was to **The Outsider**, then this would have been a waste of time for me. Toback quickly gets out of the way his former womanizing ways. Apparently, as a younger man he was quite popular with the ladies. He uses this experience to make his films. He also has a few other obsessions from his past, including gambling, drinking, and drug use, which he incorporates into his scripts.

That is all interesting, but what I am really interested in is how Toback goes about making his films. He writes an outline of the script, tells his actors what he wants for the scene and then allows them to improvise the lines. This makes the actors more involved in the film and seemingly happier while they give more realistic performances. When Wu-Tang Clan's Power points out to Toback that he would never stop on the street to talk to some guy he doesn't know, he offers a better suggestion that he blow off the guy thinking he is just looking for an autograph. The scene works in a cooler way.
(www.outsidermovie.com)

After seeing the very depressing **The Devil and Daniel Johnston** all I could think about was the power Kurt Cobain wielded. It is a pretty insignificant part of Daniel Johnston's life story, but Cobain started wearing a Daniel Johnston T-shirt to award shows and photo shoots. Then major labels wanted to sign Johnston even though they knew nothing about his music and he was in a mental institution. I would hope that Cobain did that kind of shit just to fuck with these A&R record people, but it was probably more likely that he just liked Johnston's music.

The amazing thing about Daniel Johnston is that he recorded and videotaped so much of himself from an early age that the documentary **The Devil and Daniel Johnston** seems like it just needed to be assembled. I am sure it wasn't that easy, but there sure was a lot to work with. Usually, a documentary made in a later period of a musician's career is always lacking the early footage. That is not the case of Daniel Johnston.

Daniel Johnston began his career as an artist. When he started at a new high school, he met the school's other artist David. The two became friends and started drawing together. Then Daniel started playing piano and recording his songs on his tape recorder. Daniel went to a Christian college, where he fell in love with Laurie who unfortunately was engaged to a future undertaker. He began to write all his songs about her and how she broke his heart.

His parents moved him back home, but Daniel wouldn't get a job. He wanted to become an artist and a musician. No one in his family thought that was possible. His mother began to nag him about his irresponsible laziness. He then went to live with his brother. That didn't work out so his sister let him move in with her. She was much more supportive, but one day he left without saying goodbye and joined a carnival.

Johnston sold corn dogs for the carnival, but after an incident with a fellow carnie, he was beat up and left in Austin, TX. It was in Austin that his music took off. He befriended the band Glass Eye who gave him his first show. It was also in Austin that his chronic depression began to become more severe. This was exacerbated by an incident were he took his first hit of LSD at a Butthole Surfers show. Gibby Haynes of the Butthole Surfers recalls this during an interview while he is getting his teeth cleaned at his dentist. Did he give the acid to Daniel? No, he would never do that.

Johnston's music starts to get more and more popular in Austin. He controversially wins best songwriter of the year. He crashes an MTV party for their show *The Cutting Edge* and ends up getting featured prominently in their piece about the Austin music scene. He goes to New York to work with Kramer and Sonic Youth. He records with Jad Fair. Even though there are so many great things happening for him, after his drug experience at the Butthole Surfers show he has become obsessed with the Devil. His parents allow him to take these trips, but end up coming to rescue him when things start getting weird for his hipster hosts.

Johnston's father went with him to Austin for his performance at SXSW. There were lots of people there to see him. The performance was great, albeit short. Then on the way home while his dad was flying the plane, Daniel grabbed the keys out of the ignition and threw them out the window. They made a crash landing and fortunately survived. His father found out Daniel had stopped taking his medication because he felt his performance would be better without them. He was sent back to the mental institution.
(www.sonyclassics.com/devilanddaniel

The Velvet Underground: Under Review is another one of those unauthorized DVDs that lets you know up front that no one involved with the band gave permission to make this, but they did it any way. The idea is to get a bunch music critics, some members of the band and a couple of people who were around when the band was playing to discuss the history of the band and their recordings. I always laugh at these types of documentaries. There is nothing like so-called "Velvet Underground expert" Sal Mercuri telling you what the band intended while they were recording to get you yelling at a TV screen. Or worse, recording engineer Joe Harvard showing you how Lou Reed plays guitar.

That is half the fun of these things. If you have never heard the music of the Velvet Underground, these opinions might be interesting to you. You probably wouldn't be reading *Maximum Rocknroll* anyway. So every time one of these critics comes on screen, make sure you yell out loud what an idiot he is. It is best to view this in a large group with plenty of refreshments. When Village Voice critic Robert Christgau gets on screen talking about how amazing he finds VU, you just have to yell out, "What did you give them in your review, a B+?"

Then there are the other aspects of **The Velvet Underground: Under Review** that is much more interesting. Band members Moe Tucker and Doug Yule discuss the band's music and what it was like playing during that time. Factory member Billy Name recalls making the covers for the band's albums, both with Andy Warhol and without. Steve Nelson, former manager of The Boston Tea Party where VU played when they stopped playing shows in New York, talks about the atmosphere in Boston in those days and the band's overwhelming success in that city.

Then there is the music and live footage of the band back in the day. It is too bad they couldn't get Lou Reed and John Cale to do interviews. I guess then it would have been an authorized biography and where is the fun in that? (mvdb2b.com)

I am always looking for films to review. If you made one, send a copy to me c/o MRR, PO Box 460760, San Francisco, CA 94146-0760. E-mail me at carolynmrr@juno.com if you have a film screening in San Francisco. I will go see it.

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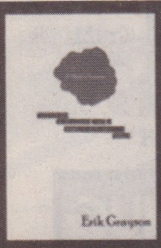

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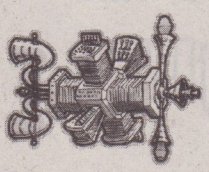

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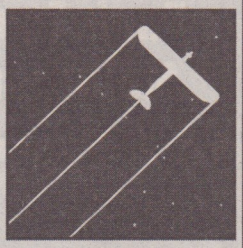

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46 SHORT – "Truth Denied" CD

Their third release, I believe. What you're faced with is 13 blasts of whirlwind punk energy, very reminiscent of early CIRCLE JERKS/ADOLESCENTS. They don't quite have the catchy tunes of the aforementioned legends, but the energy and spirit is there in abundance. (RK)

(TKO, 8941 Atlanta Ave. #505, Huntington Beach, CA 92646, www.tkorecords.com)

AMBULANCE – "Dawn of a New Beginning" EP

The new EP from this previously promising Swedish crust outfit sees the loss of the female vocals that helped distinguish them from the giant teeming mass of similar-sounding bands. Now they've got regular ol' guy vocals and while the band still rips pretty hard, they're a little more generic sounding now. The A-side's "Forever Friends" (with lyrics seemingly more suited for a posi-core band) features a more rocking DISFEAR-type style, while the two songs on the flipside continue on in the tragic style that everyone's so familiar with these days. Not bad—nothing too distinct but still pretty hard-charging all the same. (EL)

(Civilisation, www.civilisation-records.com)

ARMY OF JESUS – "By the Deed" EP

Smoking new 7" by yet another ripping hardcore band from Texas. It's pretty full-on in a SPAZM 151/POISON IDEA way, but it has an added element of choppy changes, which keeps them out of the one-dimensional hardcore territory. One of the better 7"s to come my way this year. (TB)

(Bullshit Deluxe, 716-B Harris Ave, Austin, TX 78705)

AVAIL – "Dixie" CD

A reissue of the album from '94, and one of three albums to be re-released this month, the other two being *4am Friday* and *Over the James*. Back in the days of pop-punk, garage, surf, and emo, AVAIL played a rough blend of speedy hardcore and catchy punk, mixed in with a little rock here and there—all played with a wild abandon and hectic energy. Originally released on Lookout!, this was their second album and the first to be on a "big" label; it was also the one that really defined the band and put them on the map. AVAIL were the hardcore band you could get into; they were accessible enough for non-fundamentalists, and had a genuine feel about them; they showed that "working class" punk didn't have to be…well, stupid. *Dixie* is a lot of people's favorite AVAIL album, probably because it was the first one widely distributed, and (I think) the first one they toured on internationally. Anyway, it's a great LP; even 12 years later, it doesn't sound that cheesy at all. The crowning moment of course is the cover of JOHN COUGAR's "Pink Houses." This CD package also contains the *Attempt to Regress* EP and the *Live at the Kings Head Inn* 10". (AD)

(Jade Tree, 2310 Kennwynn Road, Wilmington, DE 19810, www.jadetree.com)

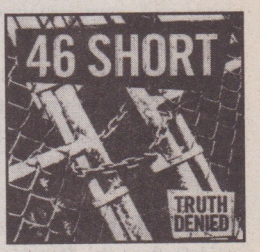
BEOWÜLF – "The Re-Releases" CD

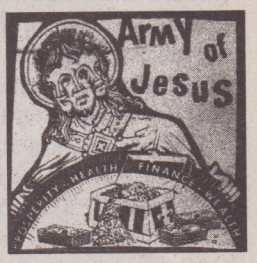
BEOWÜLF got together back in 1984 and came out of the same Venice Beach scene that brought us SUICIDAL TENDENCIES and EXCEL. This CD compiles their self-titled debut LP and the *Lost My Head….But I'm Back on the Right Track* LP. This is hard-rocking metallic thrash that takes its cue straight from MOTÖRHEAD, but has just enough of a thrashing aggressive edge to set it apart. I love this era of metallic punk and am glad to see this reissue—I think this stuff is completely killer! As a side note, there is actually a newly recorded song on here called "Killing Time," which isn't that bad. But after reading that BEOWÜLF are actually reforming and recording a new full-length, I feel like they should just let it go and not get back together. Why wreck your legacy by reforming twenty years later and putting out mediocre music? (RC)

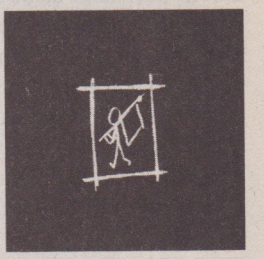
(I Scream, PO Box 46608, Los Angeles, CA 90046, iscreamrecords.com)

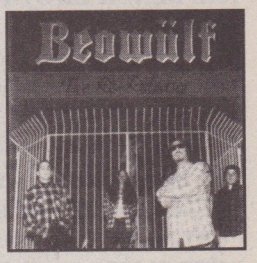
BESTHÖVEN – "A Lei do Mais Fraco" LP

12-song d-beat attack from the now-ancient Brazilian "DIS-CIMEX" "horrorcore" one-man band. D-beat is largely predicated upon topical and musical predictability; from swiping art and fonts from DISHARGE sleeves for the LP cover to basic lo-fi d-beats and war-laden lyri-









cal imagery, this delivers in spades. While solid within the genre, the impact is too muted in the recording and delivery to have this hold my interest. Its ponderous, plodding nature and dark mood are akin to the early, crude Brazillian hardcore recordings. Cool. (KS)
(Room 101 c/o Mitch Brochu, PO Box 37271, Philadelphia, PA 19148)

BILL BONDSMEN – "Lungs Seize" EP

The second EP by Detroit hardcore band the BILL BONDSMEN. Some of the tracks have a late-'80s NYHC feel not unlike a more punk JUDGE or BURN, and the vocalist has a serious Roger Miret (AGNOSTIC FRONT) thing going on. On the other hand there are some less traditional, weirder elements in the guitar and song structures. A bit hard to pin down... I'm not sure if I like it, though it's got its moments. Five songs including an ALAN MILMAN SECT cover. (CS)
($4 N. America/$8 world ppd: Acme, PO Box 441, Dracut, MA 01826, acmerecords.net)

BIRDS OF A FEATHER – "Our Aim" EP

Hailed as the Dutch wolfpack, BIRDS OF A FEATHER comes at you with five fast youth crew anthems that will make you X up and start slammin' right where you stand. I'm not going to compare BOAF to any classic crew bands because almost all newer bands in this genre start out with the intention of sounding like YOUTH OF TODAY, JUDGE, SSD, etc., but most sound like regurgitated garbage. BOAF does have some regurgitation spewing up here and there but overall this is pretty solid sounding, and after listening to this three times I have no real complaints. This 7" is included with Crucial Response's zine *Voice of a Generation*. (NE)
(Crucial Response, Kaisersfeld 98, 46047 Oberhausen, GERMANY, crucialresponse.com)

THE BLACK LIPS / THE DIRTBOMBS – split 45

Two live songs on a tour 7" from these two great garage bands. White sleeve with "Black Stereo Dirt Mono" stenciled across it and one side of the label. The DIRTBOMBS' side starts with Mick Collins saying, "Don't ever dare me," as he starts singing the opening to the EURYTHMICS' "Missionary Man." Only the DIRTBOMBS can pull that one off and make it sound cool. It does. The BLACK LIPS' side is a perfect example of their performance when they passed through SF with the DIRTBOMBS a few weeks ago. Jangly rock with harmonized vocals sounding oh-so-much like the BEATLES. This is a great record. I wish they were selling this when I saw them. (CK)
(no address)

BLACK MARKET ALLIANCE – "Believe" CD

Decent punk in the STIFF LITTLE FINGERS/RANCID vein, with a little FACE TO FACE. With the album title and some of the vagueness of the lyrics, I did try to see if this band had a "higher" message. Nothing obvious or thanks to you-know-who. So I guess we have a solid release from this Pennsylvania trio. But if they turn out to be a punk band preaching the path of Christianity for salvation, they suck. I like this, but there is a theme here of hope and change without any specifics. (RL)
(Standing Ground, www.standingground.net)

BLACK SS / RAINING BRICKS – split EP

I was really looking forward to this as BLACK SS has a great name (BLACK SHEEP SQUADRON); they don't quite live up to it though. Respectable East Coast hardcore, like an even more one-dimensional SLAPSHOT if you can imagine that. Not bad by any means, just nothing that would keep its head above water in the sea of hardcore mediocrity. RAINING BRICKS do the whole '70s rock-gone-hardcore thing—which I can fully get behind—but they really aren't that good at it unlike RNR and ANNIHILATION TIME. They butcher a COCK SPARRER song too, which is the final nail in the coffin. (TB)
(Organized Crime, PO Box 213, Brookfield, IL 60513)

BLUE MONDAY / GO IT ALONE – split EP

These six songs aren't much of a departure from each band's respective LPs. Both bands hail from Vancouver, and both inject a small dose of melody into the modern straight edge sound. After seeing both on tour this past winter, I can say that GO IT ALONE is my favorite based on the progressive political nature of their songs. That's not to say I don't I appreciate these new tracks by BLUE MONDAY, which are a little more melodic than their previous endeavors. Good stuff. (CC)
(Rivalry, www.rivalryrecords.com)

THE BOOBY TRAPS – "Shoulda Known Better" CD

These Aussies pay solid homage to their fuzzy garage punk heroes on this, their debut album. As is so often the case with these post-boom garage bands, they tend to reference every proven success story imaginable: aping the poppiness of the MUFFS (by far their strongest showing), stabbing at the soul of DETROIT COBRAS and the cutesy slash of THEE HEADCOATEES. Solid, but nothing I see myself spinning twice. (MC)
(Off the Hip, PO Box 1211, Carlton VIC 3053, AUSTRALIA, www.offthehip.com.au)

BORN/DEAD / PELIGRO SOCIAL – split EP

On their side of the split, Bay Area stalwarts BORN/DEAD put forth a scathing anthem decrying domestic violence, which comes accompanied by a cool, very well put together booklet with lyrics, an essay, and tons of information about the prevalence of violence in our culture. The lyrics are great, and the song itself—which starts out rockin' and mid-tempo and builds up into a full-on rager—won't disappoint anyone familiar with BORN/DEAD's signature CHRIST ON PARADE-influenced style. Right on. The real story of this split though, is that of Bay Area newbies PELIGRO SOCIAL, who hail from SF's Mission district and play mind-bendingly catchy, anthemic punk rock (with Spanish language lyrics) that has a really timeless quality to it. For real, these two songs—one a fast one and one a bit slower—wouldn't sound out of place on a mix tape next to old Spanish punk favorites like ESKORBUTO or RIP, though PELIGRO SOCIAL has a sort of modern, spiky-top feel as well. The singer's voice reminds me of HR, which is not a compliment I tend to throw around willy-nilly. With my very rudimentary knowledge of Spanish, I put together that their first song—"20 Ãnos" is lyrically in the same vein as "17 Years of Hell" by the PARTISANS, which is also a good musical reference point for this band. A great split. I'm stoked. (GN)
(Tankcrimes, PO Box 3495, Oakland 94609, CA, www.tankcrimes.com)

BULLET TREATMENT – "Dead Are Walking" EP

I hate the cover of this 7". A barebacked "Bro-C" girl holding a gun, with Bettie Page bangs and a large rose-covered back-piece… It just reminds me of my purgatory years when I first left England and had to move to Orange County for family reasons. I have tried to block out the ocean of dudes in flame shirts and bro-hawks, girls in regulation '50s-themed diner waitress clone gear, and this single has, uh, single-handedly brought it all back. Anyway, the back story on this band is that the guitarist is the only constant and the rest of the band is whoever he can get to play; supposedly they play early '80s style SoCal hardcore. This edition of BULLET TREATMENT features Liza Graves on the mic and Suzi Homewrecker providing backing vox—both of CIVET; some dude from the VOIDS is involved somehow too. The vocals remind me of SIGNAL LOST, that kind of gravely rock girl style; the music, to be honest, just sounds like run-of-the-mill OC hardcore from the late '90s. If that sounds like something

you wanna partake in, then get this. Reading the bands that this band has played with kind of depressed me—every washed-up reunited classic band that shouldn't have got back together, from TSOL to the DEAD KENNEDYS (or the "Ted Kennedys" as someone I know calls the reformed DKs). At any rate, something about this just seems kind of bogus to me—the production is super rock and I guess it's the fact that they reference some of my favorite bands but actually sound like regurgitated meat products in comparison. First 300 on lime green if you care. (LG)
(Basement, PO Box 511, La Habra, CA 90633-0511)

THE BUSY SIGNALS – "Can't Feel a Thing / All the Time"

Jesus Christ. Every fucking month I have to rename my favorite band. You guessed it folks, this month it's the BUSY SIGNALS. This is the second 7" I've heard from these cats and I can tell you right now that I will purchase whatever I see from them. If you think there's any chance that you might be a fan of the perfect combination of punk rock and power pop, then you really need to search this one out. Seriously, you're worth it. And if you think I'm kidding, then you're wrong. (KK)
(Shit Sandwich, 1400 S. Elmwood, Berwyn, IL 60402, www.shitsandwichrecords.com)

BUZZCOCKS – "Flat-Pack Philosophy" LP

New album from the 'COCKS. It's nice to see them still at it, and on an indie too. The music's pretty good, not as good as their early stuff but better than their later stuff…but you already knew that. It was funny to see the BUZZCOCKS and the UNDERTONES both release back-to-basics punk rock records in the last couple of years. I have to say I don't own either of them. I think I prefer the Diggle tracks over the Shelley ones; I think I always have. Anyway—new BUZZCOCKS, good… (AD)
(Damaged Goods, PO Box 45854, London E11 1YX, UNITED KINGDOM)

CHRONIC SEIZURE – "Brainsick" EP

Nice to see that yet another fucking awesome band is coming out of my hometown—fucking Chicago! Last issue some reviewer said nothing good ever comes out of Chi-town; talk about clueless. This EP will tear right through your fucking face; fast, tight hardcore and rapid-fire guitar riffs in an early '80s fast punk manner. Think DIRECT CONTROL, CAREER SUICIDE, KNIFE FIGHT, FORMALDAHIDE JUNKIES, etc.—if all those bands played a show together people would loose their shit! Well just add CHRONIC SEIZURE to the bill and watch the kids snap. Great debut EP. Awesome!!!! (MS)
(Fashionable Idiots, PO Box 580131, Minneapolis, MN 55458)

CINEMECHANICA – "The Martial Arts" CD

First impressions of this CD were "oh no, not another math-rock band…" but CINEMECHANICA is more than just another math-rock band. Sure, they have a lot of the trappings—dueling intricate guitar lines, frenetic, off-kilter rhythms, and ADD-induced song structures—but they wrap all that around a songwriting core that is essentially pop music. Most of the songs have recognizable hooks and choruses, resulting in a catchiness and playability that is uncommon for other bands that play a similar style. They seem to balk at the comparison, but describing a mix of DON CABALLERO and DRIVE LIKE JEHU does them no great disservice. (AM)
(Hello Sir, www.hellosirrecords.com)

CLOCKCLEANER – "Nevermind" CD

A very early-'90s sound on this; shouted vocals and the boomy drums/chunky guitar sound that reminds of bands like CHERUBS or VERTIGO or DUH that are fucking *ruling* the bargain bins these days. These guys are going for the aural cement mixer effect, just keep that gelatinous goo churning, channel some off every once in awhile, don't rotate too fast, just keep it at one rotation every three seconds. Dull City. (RW)
(Reptilian, 403 S. Broadway, Baltimore, MD 21231, www.reptilianrecords.com)

COCOCOMA – "All I Give" EP

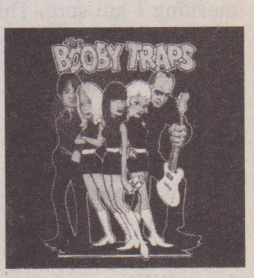
COCOCOMA uses all the best elements of "garage" from '60s-style fuzz guitar and keyboard-driven rompage to trashed out punk. The instruments sound loose and sloppy while the songs themselves are well structured and catchy. And the production retains a full and well-balanced sound at no sacrifice whatsoever to the required garage-itude. And I love the Daniel Johnston-like cover art. Yet another good 'un from Shit Sandwich. (PC)
(Shit Sandwich, 1400 S. Elmwood, Berwyn, IL 60402, www.shitsandwichrecords.com)

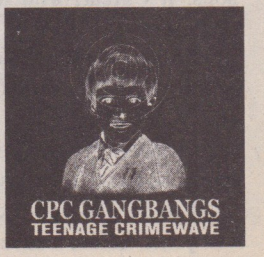
CPC GANGBANGS – "Teenage Crimewave" EP

If "Teenage Crimewave" was on a *KBD* comp, all the collectors would be throwing wads of cash around trying to get a copy. Some early STOOGES attitude in the vocals, music in the neighborhood of the SCREAMERS with guitar (at least, I think I hear a guitar in the sonic soup here)…an all around winner. "Blood on the Wall" and "Life Support" sound like (good) rehearsal space recordings that are meant to be played at 37 RPM (how's that for being arty?): at the recommended 45 they sound Chipmunky (nothing wrong with that) but at 33 the vocals sound a little low. Die Slaughterhaus scores again. (DD)
(Die Slaughterhaus, PO Box 160168, Atlanta, GA 30316, www.dshrecords.com)

CRETINS – "Samin in Darm" 12"

This veteran band from Hanover may have been originally inspired by the RAMONES, but their style of punk is closer to the NITWITZ; this six-song EP features both studio and live tracks recorded in 1980. The studio tunes have more of a sensitivity to subtle melodic hooks, though the recording isn't as thick or hard as their norm (even though the songs are pretty catchy). The flip, on the other hand, contains live tunes with a





high treble bias and their familiar energy—really fun, sharply honed punk rock; "Discofucks" is a good representation of their classic sound. Fun listening! (SS)
(Re-Force, Wohlerhot 4, 30900 Wedemark, GERMANY)

CRIMSON SPECTRE / UWHARRIA – split CD

CRIMSON SPECTRE reminds me of DRI or WEHRMACHT mixed with some alt-rock band like CIRCLE TAKES SQUARE—way good at some points and then just way too math rock and weird college emo at other times. Stolen lyrics from required readers screamed along with rants of oppression and politics; actually some good stuff there. UWHARRIA plays a bit different but still fits the description of the first band pretty nicely. The lyrics are kind of pretentious, but well-meaning I am sure. This CD contains nicely shot live footage of CRIMSON and a video by UWHARRIA, which I like because of the grizzly bears featured in it. Sorry, boys, I would rather hear the "Farmyard Boogie" ciderhouse remix. Yet, I have a feeling that there is a certain circle of bearded twenty-somethings that really enjoys these bands. What more can I say? Nice art on the CD face. (WK)
(Magic Bullet, 17 Argyle Hills Dr., Fredericksburg, VA 22405, www.magicbulletrecords.com)

DEFLATOR MOUSE – "The New One" 2xCD

A songwriter showcase here. Two-disc set with the first disc being good punky stuff with a guitar-pop edge in the vein of SUPERCHUNK and straight power pop, almost later DICKIES-like. The second disc is more acoustic, guitar-wise. Think ADAM SCHMIDT-meets-indie. A good release as it's the rock disc that gets it done here. (RL)
(Pop Smear, www.popsmearrecords.com)

DEEP WOUND – "I Saw It" LP

DEEP WOUND was a hardcore band from Western Massachusetts in the early '80s. Their sole proper release, a self-titled EP from 1983, has since become a somewhat of a cult record and sought after for several reasons: it's great, wild teenage thrash, it was recorded at Boston's legendary Radiobeat Studio by Lou Giordano (who also produced records by SS DECONTROL, JERRY'S KIDS, the F.U.'S, the PROLETARIAT, and pretty much every other classic Boston-area hardcore group), and some of the members went on to play in successful rock outfits in the years before and after "punk broke" in 1991. This LP collects DEEP WOUND's entire recorded output—the aforementioned EP, two songs from the *Bands That Could Be God* compilation, and their 1982 demo—plus a live track called "Let's Go to the Mall" that sounds like an extended improvised jam. Along with contemporaries like DRI and the NEOS, DEEP WOUND was one of those hardcore bands that pioneered the "play as fast as you possibly can" philosophy. For some folks out there, this kind of thing is the pinnacle of achievement in punk rock; I always thought this band was a *bit* overrated (I prefer the OUTPATIENTS). However on the fourth or so spin tonight, the EP tracks are hitting pretty hard. The demo stuff was recorded in a basement and you can tell, but there is a great rocker called "Psyched to Die" that unfortunately did not get redone in the studio. The LP includes some funny photos of the band on the back, but is noticeably missing a lyric sheet or insert of any kind. Worth checking out for any fans of early American hardcore. (CS)
(Damaged Goods, PO Box 45854, London E11 1YX, UNITED KINGDOM, www.damagedgoods.co.uk)

DIRTY BS – "15 Years" EP

This is decent mid-paced hardcore/punk with gruff, spoken vocals over some simple riffage. The music reminds me of DISCHARGE without the d-beat. Not too shabby. (CC)
(Slasher, www.slasherrecords.com)

DISCHARGE / MG-15 – split EP

This record is pretty much a total bummer, from the hopelessly pixelated cover to the embarrassing 2005 version of DISCHARGE covering their own songs, and badly. The MG-15 side isn't horrible, but it doesn't hold a torch to this great Spanish band's classic early '80s EP and demo. They still play basic, no-frills Dis-core (but with a "pro" sound), and they blow away the DISCHARGE side of this split, which—frankly—just sucks. I guess that's Rat Varuker on vocals doing beefed-up karaoke versions of "You Take Part in Creating the System" and "The Nightmare Continues." Please, spare me. (GN)
(Throne, PO Box 8035, 33200 Gijon, SPAIN, www.thronerecords.com)

THE DISTANCE – "If You Lived Here You'd Be Home Already" CD

The DISTANCE have given up on trying to sound like AMERICAN NIGHTMARE, and have now begun an arduous journey to be featured next to the COMEBACK KID interview in *Alternative Press*. The DRAMARAMA cover of "Anything, Anything" right before the cover of MINOR THREAT's "Filler" proves that in 2006 anything can happen. Avoid this. (CC)
(Think Fast!, 20230 Calice Court Unit 402, Estero, FL 33928)

DRAMA QUEENS – "Sting of the Bee" EP

This one's a bit of a throwback, borrowing heavily from the hardcore style where the singer does more fast-talking than singing. Sure, they do that, but they mix a bit of that hotrod rock in there too. It's decent enough, but I can't say that it left a huge impression on me. (KK)
(Shoot First, attn: Ryan Sweeney, 5160 Rice Rd., #151, Antioch, TN, 37013, www.shootfirstrecords.com)

THE DREAM IS DEAD – "Hail the New Pawn" LP

Musically, this record falls into the category of "Not My Thing"—modern metallic hardcore with heavy guitars, discordant noodling riffs, complex drumming, frequent tempo changes, monotone scream-y vocalist, etc. For someone like myself who does not listen to or enjoy this type of music, all the songs sound the same and I have no real musical point of reference. I can't say I dig the fancy artwork or lyrical style either… But at least folks seem to have their hearts in the right place and I found some interesting and thought-provoking subjects tackled in their songs, accompanied by well-written explanations. Though their LP looks and sounds to me like a metalcore record that I imagine Victory might release, where it counts the DREAM IS DEAD is indeed a political punk band with DIY ethics. (CS)
(Escape Artist, PO Box 472, Downingtown, PA 19335, www.escapeartistrecords.com)

THE DREAM IS DEAD – "Hail the New Pawn" CD

Amped metallic overload and chaotic time changes splatter brutal grind amidst a full-tilt hardcore attack with heavy in-the-red instrument bashing, breakdowns, and thrashing. Akin to a metallic evolution of ICE NINE, or a more beefy BURN IT DOWN, with wild shifts of intensity, from segmented parts to parts that seem to originate out of the angularity of Midwest post-punk experimentation, rather than simplistic metalcore. The music is overwhelming, complex, thick, and sheened with the dark distortion of current DIY hardcore, while the harsh, straightforward hardcore vocals cut through the brutal din. Eleven tracks with great, political lyrics and intent, attacking the two-party system, homophobia,

and promoting DIY hardcore values. Awesome. (KS)
(Escape Artist, PO Box 472, Downingtown, PA 19335, www.escapeartistrecords.com)

DROWNING NATION – "Mouthful of Shit" EP

Just had to check this was recorded recently as its soooo retro. These Finns take influence from the USA circa '82/'83, sounding like a *Pick Your King*-era POISON IDEA, early GANG GREEN, and NEGATIVE APPROACH. Not the least bit original but actually really good if you dig the retro hardcore sounds. I actually like them way more when they take their foot off the gas and slow things down like on "Not a Pretty Sight"; that song rules. (TB)
(Rat Bite, ratbiterecords@gmail.com)

EATER – "Live at Barbarellas 1977" LP

...Ah, EATER....one of my fave Brit-punk bands from the first wave of '76!!!!!! They were the youngest on the scene and they were *all* getting plenty of nookie from the ever-so-hot punkettes of that bleak era. The lads were quite well known for their stinky fingers!!!!!! This record was recorded live on 8/30/77 with the band's second drummer (sorry chicken-hawks, no Dee Generate). The sound quality is pretty motherfucking good.....not as wonderful as the *Live at the Roxy* LP but worlds better than any of those lousy BLACK FLAG boots that have been popping up!!!!!!! The performance is spot on...EATER was a tight-ass live outfit with simple, hooky little tunes that make you wanna piss all over your father's big titties!!!!!!!!!!!!! Unfortunately this platter is pressed on shitty "Get Back" Italian vinyl that develops "groove distortion" after only six plays... ...but I guess that fits the new disposable generation quite well...you stupid fucking bastards..... (SW)
(Get Back, via Aretina 25, 50069 Sieci [Firenze], ITALY, www.abraxasrecords.com)

ED BRIGADE / SUMO – split EP

Two Italian skate-punk bands—the thing was over before I could find an address on here. SUMO is fast, scrappy, and discordant whereas ED BRIGADE is faster and less scrappy and discordant. Not bad. (AD)
(Lele Giraudo, Strada Ponte Rosso 8, 10090 Foglizzo, ITALY)

EIGHTYFOUR – "All the Wrong Questions" CD

Debut long one from a trio of youngsters picking up from where LIFETIME left off, and giving it a good shot. Lots of heartfelt screaming, melodic riffage, and some lengthy, biting emo/political lyrics. Those folks really missing INQUISITION should check this out. (RK)
(New Regard Media, PO Box 5706, Bellingham, WA 98227, www.newregardmedia.com)

THE EU'S ARSE – "Adesso Come Allora..." CD

In the '80s, the EU'S ARSE played classic Italian hardcore that was both raw and tightly played. I would describe their sound as a mix of WHITE CROSS, MG-15, and BGK, but of course with a distinct Italian style. Those are not bands to be taken lightly and neither is EU'S ARSE; they are the real deal. This contains all of the band's recordings as well as live tracks with pretty great sound and some live video footage from 2004. SOA did a great job with this and it is well worth tracking down. (WK)
(SOA, via Oderisi da Gubbio, 00146 Roma, ITALY, www.soarecords.it)

EVOLUTION SO FAR / GARGANTHA – split EP

Two hardcore bands of varying styles from Italy on this split EP. EVOLUTION SO FAR sounds like a strong mix of GORILLA BISCUITS and GOOD RIDDANCE. In other words, fast vocals sung more than screamed, complete with almost talking parts. They also do a fair cover of BLACK FLAG's "Rise Above," but hasn't that song been covered enough? GARGANTHA has a more European feel to them. Sounding a lot like Dutch counterparts YAWP and FUNERAL ORATION, this band delivers some strong social-political melodic hardcore. Good stuff from another scene that is thriving, but that I would like to hear more from. (JF)
(Dadadischi, Luca Zanette, V.le ai Caduti 20, 10098 Rivoli, ITALY, www.dadadischi.org)

EXILADOS / EXTERMINIO – split CD

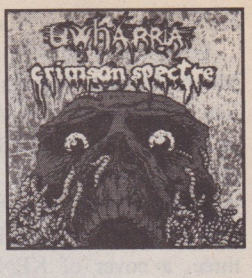
Cool split of Mexican hardcore. EXILADOS play urgent lo-fi hardcore/punk with harsh yet understandable shouted vocals and a nice fuzzy guitar tone. This is pretty simple and bare-bones, but there's plenty of sincerity to the playing, and the well-written lyrics, all in Spanish, cover plenty of timely political topics such as immigration and, of course, Professor Bush. EXTERMINIO plays darker, heavier, more metallic and melodic hardcore with more than a little TRAGEDY influence and screamed vocals. Lyrics are in both English and Spanish and are still political in nature, though as seen through a hopeless desperation sort of bent. (EL)
(Reacciona, c/o Fernando Lozano, Apdo. Postal 1946, C.P. 64001, Monterrey, N.L. MEXICO, gireaccion@hotmail.com)

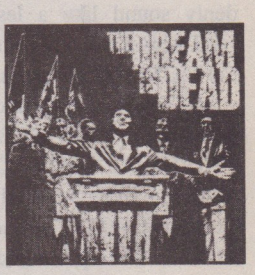
EXPIRED YOUTH – "Where We Stand" CD

What we have here is modern youth crew hardcore with a huge guitar sound not unlike CARRY ON. The vocals have a high, Midwestern feel that reminds me of FACE VALUE-era Tony Erba. The parts where the singer attempts to actually sing ruins this for me. I'm sorry, but I can't hang with the whining. (CC)
(Think Fast!, 20230 Calice Court Unit 402, Estero, FL 33928)

EXTORTION – "Liar" EP

Whoa, this is tough and aggressive hardcore from Australia that has that hectic feel of a band like TEAR IT UP. They mix together some mid-tempo power with super fast craziness and powerful growling vocals to boot. I think this EP is totally fucking good and I think you will too! (RC)
(Extortion, PO Box 423, Maylands 6931, WA, AUSTRALIA, equalizing_extort@hotmail.com)





RECORDS

FANNY ALGER – "Lake Sixteen" CD

Four wacky guys from the mean streets of Mount Vernon, Washington. Sounds a little like NOMEANSNO/HANSON BROTHERS or DEVO or HICKOIDS or something that we have never, any of us, ever heard before. I don't know if this is shit or brilliant…it might take me years to figure it out. I lost it at track three, a cover of KENNY ROGERS' "The Gambler"… This might be genius. (AD)
(Fanny Alger, PO Box 2125, Mount Vernon, WA 98273)

FASCIST FASCIST – CD

I think I would like this better live... They have a song called "Working Women Are Pissed Too (But I Still Love You D Boon)" which updates HEAVENS TO BETSY's "Waitress Hell" concept—the total alienation of the working woman—"My pink collar is turning blue," Ellie hollers. (Anything that references the MINUTEMEN hits a soft spot, you know?) I actually love her voice; it's really cool, and I can't think of a suitable comparison. She sounds punk as fuck and sort of reminds me of classic early '80s SF girl punks like Penelope Houston—but she has a Rick Fork (DRIVE LIKE JEHU/HOT SNAKES) quality that I can't explain, and I think she takes the sound from "average" to "good." The music could be boring bar-rock revivalism, but then it will suddenly sound like a less-WIPERS-influenced HOT SNAKES, and in places it reminds me of the MONORCHID; something about the guitar sound, maybe. If you care, this features ex-members of THE GREAT UNRAVELLING, UNIVERSAL ORDER OF ARMAGEDDON… Baltimore indignation. (LG)
(Reptilian, 403 S. Broadway, Baltimore, MD 21231, www.reptilianrecords.com)

FINAL EXIT / STRAIGHT EDGE KEGGER – split EP

First off, I have to mention the horrendous artwork on the STRAIGHT EDGE KEGGER side of the cover. I don't really find the humor in seeing a bad drawing of a half naked Yoda leaning on a bong and taking a shit in a cat box. I guess it *sounds* funnier than it looks. Anyway, STRAIGHT EDGE KEGGER blasts their way through a few songs of chaotic thrash with screechy female vocals. It starts off pretty messy and continues to get worse towards the end of their side. These FINAL EXIT songs, which were recorded back in 1995, are so muffled and low that I could barely hear them coming out of the speakers. It doesn't matter anyway, because it is all a mess of whacked out distortion and noise anyways. No thanks! (RC)
(Blastcore, 1320 W. Escalon, Fresno, CA 93711, thrashfreak787@aol.com)

FLOWERS IN THE ATTIC – "Human" CD

Weird, I kind of enjoy this CD… It is really sludgy and heavy—not really in the usual HIGH ON FIRE '70s rock way, more like SONIC YOUTH or KYLESA, with lots of layered guitar and dissonant song structures. They feature a female singer who sounds like she is shredding her larynx when she sings, which is cool, nice and distorted. At times the lyrics seem contrived, and yet there is something here. Sure, this is the type of band that all stand facing away from the audience. They probably attract a mean college crowd or maybe a lot of stoners. Still, I think I can get into it because of the raw recording quality and the buzz-saw bass riffs. Not exactly what you put on at a party, but probably good for that day you are at work and just want to zone out to some depressing atmospheric music… I hate the art on the CD. (WK)
(Reptilian, 403 S. Broadway, Baltimore, MD 21231, www.reptilianrecords.com)

FOR THE WORSE – "Couldn't Give Two Shits About the Kids" LP

A vinyl issue of this 2003 recording, with 25 tracks of blasting hardcore akin to the NEIGHBORS in full-tilt throttling attack, relentless high speed, and scaling, caustic vocals, or OUT COLD's ram-charged '80s-referenced song structure. Featuring the singer from EVEN WORSE, this Boston band proficiently delivers track after track of no frills, high energy, hammering hardcore. The lyrics that are provided (lyrics for songs that end in choruses like "Boston! Boston! Boot Boys" lyrics aren't provided for whatever reason…oh…yawn) topically range from anti-religion to friendship to moshing to pro wrestling to scene politics to posers, and are delivered in the speeding thrash mass as well as in STORMTROOPERS OF DEATH-style song snippets and comedy bits between tracks. When reduced to comedy (like songs here about losing the TV remote and dental floss), the anger and intensity of this kind of music is cheapened for me, but for others it's their entire entryway into the scene. A gatefold album cover with glossy, pixilated, full-color photo of poo in a toilet is a bigger barrier overall for anyone considering purchasing this disc… Yuck! (KS)
(Even Worse, Saenredamstraat 44-2, 1072 Ch Amsterdam, HOLLAND)

FORTH ROTOR – "Plain" CD

This is some solid Midwest punk, and it rocks, dudes. It's jerky and catchy and has meat on its bones. Jesus, what the hell am I talking about? I hear snatches of the MINUTEMEN in the vocals and bass (it's not as "funk"—more rocking sounding). Something about the dynamics reminds me a little of FUGAZI or maybe CALVARY. But it's not as cerebral as either of those bands—it's fuckin basement punk rock at its finest. It sounds classic but also somewhat undefinable, hence this ridiculous review. I imagine this band is incredible live. I am fuckin' psyched because they are playing a show in my back yard this month. Should be awe-inspiring judging by the evidence provided thus far. Seriously, go see this band and get this CD. If kids were into stuff like this rather than AGAINST ME! punk would be so much radder. (LG)
(Underground Communique, 1200 W Hood, Apt. 1, Chicago, IL 60660)

THE FRAMED – "Countless Ways of Self-Destruction" CD

I needed this, I needed a shot of straight-up punk energy—no frills, no spills, just that classic sound that got me into this dead fucking horse of a scene way back when. This is as classic sounding as it gets; new cats firmly planted in that beautiful region that nests somewhere between YOUTH BRIGADE and the FREEZE, SOCIAL DISTORTION and the GC5. Coming off as a grown up TANKA RAY, if TANKA RAY was ever given a chance. I'm floored, I've this got this month's winner, I've got April's soundtrack and a plethora of new tunes to scream in the shower. I haven't even mentioned the heartfelt, class-conscious lyrics, the mammoth whoa-whoa-whoa singalongs, the killer hooks, the rocked out leads, and a singer that any band would pimp their mothers for. This is the reason I stick around, for every once in a while a nugget of pure punk rock gold drops into my lap. (SD)
(Reality Clash, PO Box 491, Dana Point, CA 92629, www.theframed.com)

FRANTIC – "Attaque of the Grizzlie" LP

Fuzzed-out retarded punk from down South. This shit could have been pulled off some obscuro *Killed by Death* comp and you chumps would be none the wiser. Retro in the best possible sense, taking the fucked-up-ness of Jay Reatard's recent outings but keeping one foot firmly in the '80s. This label is right on the fucking money these days, and these no-marks are no exception. Dig it. (TB)
(Die Slaughterhaus, PO Box 160168, Atlanta, GA 30316, www.dshrecords.com)

FRUSTRATION – "Wait" EP

FRUSTRATION is French, so that means if they are playing on the downbeat (they are) then they are going to have almost a hundred years of Gaulois consumption and sordid poetry backing their sour attitudes up. These guys

are on a mission to make the pre-JOY DIVISION band WARSAW a genre unto itself, and they succeed with a resigned electrical elan. I don't think there is another band on the planet right now that does a better job of channeling those early impulses that put the "post" into post-punk better than these guys…well, maybe the A FRAMES. All four songs on here are great, and I found the blatant JOY DIVISION lift on one to be charming in the same way that early punker bands would lift riffs from '50s rockabilly songs wholesale. Whaddafuck. The Cold Wave is back, get behind it before you fucking hang yourself. (RW)
(S-S, s-srecords.com)

FRUSTRATION – "Blind" 12"

It's official: I fucking love this band! Their 12" from last year was fucking fantastic and this (and their new 7" EP) pick up right where that left off. In case you've been sleeping, FRUSTRATION is a French band (featuring some ANTEENAGERS MC folks) playing perfect post-punk in the vein of JOY DIVISION. Although it's an obvious and perhaps intimidating reference point, it should be mentioned that FRUSTRATION remains every bit a loud, highly rocking band. There's just this cold, distant and totally fucking deviant air about their sound, yet it's still very bouncy and punk. Highest possible recommendation. (MC)
(Born Bad, jbgullot@wanado.fr)

FULLY COHERANT – "Feel Dead" EP

Sounds like *someone* is an A+ student in the JAY REATARD 101 course recently offered over at Fuck U. FULLYCOHERANT is the one-man bedroom project of some Texas cat named Mike Robinson, who, in spite of his band name, is anything but all together. This is all terribly derivative of the early REATARDS material, down to the nearly plagiarized hate-filled liners. The main difference is that, unlike the REATARDS, nothing on this FULLY COHERENT disc hints at anything beyond the desperation and self-destructive tendencies. You know, like good songs or something. Regardless, tactics such as these never fail to get my blood pumping, so I still recommend this to those who can find one of the 103 (!) copies pressed. (MC)
(Mike Robinson/Fully Coherent, PO Box 301601, Austin, TX 78703)

GASCOIGNE – "Massive Assault" CD

Blasting through 14 songs in 19 minutes, the Netherlands' GASCOIGNE offers up some high energy hardcore for the kids. It's definitely not the kind of tough guy, bonehead hardcore that HATEBREED or 25 TA LIFE play, but the testosterone levels are way too high for me to get into this. (VH)
(Shield, Daendelsstraat 67c, 5018 ER Tilburg, NETHERLANDS, www.theshieldhardcore.com)

GODING'S SAWED OFF / SICK AND TIRED – split EP

Tearing through three songs a piece, SICK AND TIRED and GODING'S SAWED OFF deliver one of the better hardcore records to come through this month. Both bands play harsh, energetic hardcore that's loosely founded on the youth-crew style, but swap out the positivity for some malice and hate. GODING'S songs are spastic and intense. I love the harsh vocals, but they get to be a little too epic and metallic for my taste so I'll have to say SICK AND TIRED win this round of thumb wrestling. Definitely worth checking out. (VH)
(Something Wicked, 19 Brookside Dr., Wilbraham, MA 01095)

FREEMAN SOCIAL – "3" CD

Eclectic, mid-tempo indie from Colorado. Sounds about twelve years out-of-date but fair play to them. (AD)
(King Bee, PO Box 1164, Denver, CO 80201)

HEAD ON COLLISION – "Arise from the Wreckage" CD

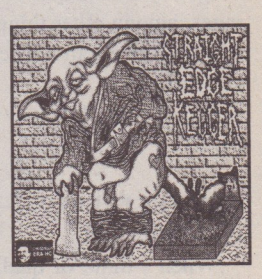
Straight up, no frills, thrash metal *a la* EXODUS and KREATOR from this killer St. Louis group. Everything from the album cover, which reminds me of an old SLAYER shirt I used to have, to the vocal inflection and bridge/chorus patterns, is directly lifted from the best of '80s speed metal (especially on "Permanent Damage"). No metalcore trappings or poser traces to be found here, just full-speed-ahead thrashing guitars, tight playing, good production, catchy riffs, and white sneakered, mustache-sporting, mullet-flailing metal. (EL)
(www.hocollision.com)

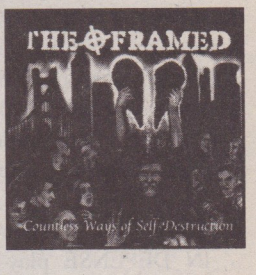
THE HELL – "Typical Shit" EP

Excellent debut EP by this Alabama band. The title track is fucking killer—the lament of the modern-day suburban drone; wild, catchy, and anthemic. The rest of the EP is a good mix of faster hardcore and mid-tempo songs, "Kamikaze" being the other standout cut. Production is rough (in the good way) and there is a sense of both melody and urgency throughout. I particularly like the vocalist's delivery—it dates back to a time before the conventional scream-at-the-top-of-your-lungs hardcore style was established when punk singers had character and personality and were usually weird and somewhat unnerving. Highly recommended. (CS)
(Pink Pentagram, PO Box 2533, Tuscaloosa, AL 35403, www.hellalabama.com)

THE HORROR – "The Fear, the Terror, the Horror" CD

Burly RIPCHORD-style UK hardcore with the straightforward, stripped-down crunch of Boston '82 SSD *The Kids Will Have Their Say*-style hardcore. The throaty vocals gnarl and growl over fast hardcore with pounding breaks, updated through modern recording and the occasional shift in delivery to extreme high-speed thrashing and modern power-violence-like flourishes. Featuring the musicians that made up VORHEES, with the singer of IMBALANCE on vocals, these 18 curt, to-the-point tracks tear with of bit more bite than I remember the final VORHEES sessions. Blunt socio-political lyrics of resistance and anger… Killer! (KS)
(Chainsaw Safety, www.chainsawsafetyrecords.com)





HOSTAGE SITUATION – "1 2 3 4 5 6..." EP

Rapid-fire youth crew hardcore. The recording is from 2003: I believe this is from the demo session. The speed of playing makes for a more interesting straight edge release. Third Party has been doing a good job of putting out some of the more interesting stuff coming out of this genre of hardcore. HOSTAGE SITUATION brings us eleven songs about betrayal and non-smoking messages, among other things. If you are a fan of this stuff give 'em a listen you'll probably get into this. (MS)
(Third Party, 21 Nancy Lane, Amherst, NY 14228)

HUDSON FALCONS – "Singles Collection 1997-2002" CD

When I think of quality street punk, these guys come to mind. In the glut of street/Oi overkill, you can't go wrong with the DROPKICK MURPHYS, BONECRUSHER, and these guys. Unfortunately they cancelled the one time I went to see them so I've never had the live experience. 20 tracks from various splits and 7"s. A good deal. (RL)
(Street Anthem, www.streetanthemrecords.com)

IN DEFENSE – "Twin Cities Crew" EP

IN DEFENSE play simple, by-the-numbers, thrashy hardcore. The lyrics center around slamming in the pit, giving shout-outs to Twin Cities bands of yore, and being straight edge. My only big complaint is the horrendous snare sound, which could be mistaken for someone dribbling a basketball in the recording studio. (CC)
(Give Praise, P.O. Box 494, Barnstable MA, 02630-0494)

LOS INVASORES – "El Ejecutivo" EP

These cats were from mid/late-'80s Uruguay, yet another South American nation that "enjoyed" our long-standing sponsorship of its iron-fisted dictatorship's protection of the top 10% of the social pyramid. The military finally stepped back from power in 1985 (the economy's then-recent collapse probably had a lot to do with that), giving bands like LOS INVASORES their first real chance to make their mark. Unfortunately, these guys were submarined by their label who apparently "didn't want another SEX PISTOLS," so these tracks were trapped on a cassette in a shoebox until this release. Since a lot of their lyrics were about rejecting the omnipresent American cultural hegemony and creating a real self-made scene, you can just *see* the executives with their freshly-minted jobs cringing in the studio. All four tracks on here are great, showing a rushing pre-hardcore punk sound (think early 1981) that references UK and USA influences without aping any specific band; the title track is the best. If this had come out in 1985 these guys would be SA punk legends like LIXOMANIA or ULSTER. Buying this record is a blow against Bechtel, punk! (RW)
(Lengua Armada, no address)

I OBJECT – "Teaching Revenge" CD

Super DIY, femme-fronted political hardcore that sounds a lot like the PROFITS if they had a guitarist who dug straight edge licks. On paper this is totally great, and I know the kids love 'em, it's just a little paint-by-numbers for me. I'm digging the sentiment though and if you already like them you will love this. (TB)
(Alternative Tentacles, PO Box 419092, San Francisco, CA 94141)

ISOBEL – "Something Better" EP

Driving French-pop-influenced indie rock from Italy, SERGE GAINSBOURG meets '90s Dischord, but a bit clean and lacking the critical sleaze to pull this off 100%. Still there's a lot of unique hooks and proficient playing with cool dynamic changes that make for an alright listen here; seemingly lost on a lot of bands in this sub-genre... The recording has a live quality to it that pops—you can hear the room, and it makes for a more true sounding recording—not overproduced, sterile studio garbage. Guitar and vocal lines interchange smooth yet dissonant countermelodies that remind me of UNWOUND while the drums keep rap-tapping out a strong rhythm-heavy backbone that still steps off the curb to play in traffic enough to keep things interesting. (BS)
(Smartz!, smartzrecords.org)

THE JAM – "3 Suits and the Seaside Shuffle" LP

Bootleg live recording of their famous Winter Gardens show in June '77. I love the JAM, nestling next to the SMALL FACES and the WHO as my all-time favorites, but let me tell ya straight, this sucks the wab, licks the lanyard, chokes on the length. The JAM prided themselves on perfection; screw this bathtub recording and go buy the official *Dig the New Breed* live recording. (SD)
(bootleg)

THE JESUS SKINS / JEWDRIVER – split LP

The novelty value of this picture disc wears off after one song by either band. The JESUS SKINS play poppy Oi! Lite that is even wimpier than the VANILLA MUFFINS. JEWDRIVER plays boring, mediocre punk with all the excitement of a fucking houseplant. The music is completely unlistenable, so you will have to read the lyrics to get the joke out of this piece of shit. All in all, a complete waste of vinyl. (BR)
(Impact, www.impact-records.de)

KILLED IN ACTION – "Self Abuse" EP

I hate it when a reviewer says that the music they are about to review is not their thing. You wonder why they even try to review it, slag it, or try to fake like they have an opinion. This ain't really my thing though, just so everyone knows. KILLED IN ACTION plays fast, thrashin' hardcore with real spastic parts of dual vocals, blasts, breakdowns, double bass kick drum, twangy snare, growls, grunts, and screams. I like the screams and guitars the most. I know people who love this music, I'm not judging, just trying to paint the picture. (WK)
(Give Praise, PO Box 494, Barnstable, MA 02630-0494)

KNOCK DOWN – "Discography" CD

Sounds like: A straight edge *Victim in Pain*. Points of interest: Better than VIOLENT MINDS. For fans of: Hardcore. (CC)
(Youngblood, www.youngblood-records.com)

THE KNOCKOUTS – "D-Zug" EP

Alright, so it's the KNOCKOUTS UK. Three instros from a guitar, organ, drums, percussion, and dash of Theremin outfit that cites "surf, punk and LINK WRAY" as influences but also displays some nice low-budget artiness around the edges. Press release also mentions these KNOCKOUTS "used to be THRILLED SKINNY" whose "drummer went on to work with ex-SWELL MAP Jowe Head," so that connection might explain something. I'm looking forward to settling in with one of their full-lengthers (three CD albums available, plus this EP also available on CD—at least it beats the stuffing-too-much-stuff-on-a-CD trend). (DD)
(Topplers, www.topplers.net/knockouts)

LEFT HAND PATH – "The Wreckage" EP

This band is all over the place stylistically, and I don't have the patience for most of it. If you can wade through all the sing-songy parts and budget MADBALL lyrics, you'll find a few kick-ass tracks on here with a strong mid-'80s California crossover sound. Like I said, it's all over the place, so listen at your own risk. (CC)
(Organized Crime, www.organizedcrime records.com)

THE LITTLE KILLERS – "A Real Good One" CD

I just love the sound of the LITTLE KILLERS. The vocals are drawled out like the singer has a mouth full of gum. The music counters by being really punchy and catchy. On this, their second record, the sound remains intact. I am really happy about that. Why change it when you've got it right the first time? (CK)
(Gern Blandsten, PO Box 356, River Edge, NJ 07661)

LOVE EQUALS DEATH – "Nightmerica" CD

Featuring the singer from LOOSE CHANGE, this local band dishes out produced punk in the vein of BAD RELIGION, FACE TO FACE, and NOFX, although there is a dark—dare I say goth—quality here in some of the guitar parts and artwork. This is a good, catchy release with just enough angst and politics to keep it apart from radio-ready wannabes. (RL)
(Fat Wreck, fatwreck.com)

MACHINEGUN BLUES – "I Wanna Be Sexy" CD

Four track EP of bluesy punk rock, with the emphasis on the rock. There's some BLACK LIPS in there and some Mick Collins worship too. None too shabby but nothing that's rocking my boat. (TB)
(Not Bad, www.notbadrecords.com)

MAGRUDERGRIND – "Sixty Two Trax of Thrash" CD

A complete discography of everything (minus the recent SHITSTORM split) released from '02 to '05 by this crushing (and prolific) Maryland thrash/grind outfit. Here you get: splits with SANITYS DAWN, GOD-STOMPER, A WARM GUN, AKKOLYTE, VOMIT SPAWN; the *Owned!* 7"; the *Religious Battle* MCD; and the *Don't Support...* demo. The quality's pretty consistently high throughout and if you make it more than halfway through the disc, the intensity of it all gets pretty overwhelming. They have a relentless attack, and are maybe the best example of an even balance between the thrash and grind styles. The vocals are screeched nonstop *a la* FLESH PARADE, the guitar is super heavy, and the drumming's pretty damn sick. The grind shit on the SANITYS DAWN release in particular is fucking great. (EL)
(Torture Garden Picture Company, torturegardenpictures@hotmail.com)

MARVEL – "Unleashed" CD

Here's a release dedicated to all of those interchangeable arena-rock bands that totally ignored punk as if it never happened—well, maybe "they" wore striped trousers on their 1979 tour, but that was it. 30 years later, here's another band putting out a record without any readily apparent punk moment, only now these guys have to deny the accumulated detritus of the last 30 years as well. What if the TIME FLYS really sucked? They would be these guys, and they would be from Sweden too. (RW)
(Black Juju, Box 2140, Stockholm, SWEDEN)

THE MEASURE (SA) – "Historical Fiction" LP

The more I listen to this record the more I hear comparisons that just don't work. One second I hear a band like RUMBLESEAT, then I hear some SOVIETTES and the whole basic "I grew up with early Lookout or No Idea record releases" thing going on. Somehow, though, the MEASURE (SA) has blended it into something that also has the feel of PETROGRAD and pre-dance CHUMBAWAMBA. Whatever you want to say it sounds like, you can sum it up with the word: "excellent"! A winner that you can get from... (JF)
(Salinas, PO Box 20996, Ferndale, MI 48220)

THE MERCY SUITE – "Crestfallen" CD

The MERCY SUITE doesn't break any new ground on the melodic emo/pop-core front, but they play with proficiency and spunk. The guitar-work is great, firmly rooted in the tradition of DAG NASTY and JAWBREAKER, and the drumming is nice 'n' punchy—probably their strongest point. The vocals go from screamed to sung (of course) but they don't cheese it up too much and the choruses have good melodies. The production is top-notch, but not radio-punk overproduced. Whereas most bands of this genre succumb to cliché and melodrama, these guys keep it real and, dare I say, pretty punk. (PC)
(Bombed Out, PO Box 17, Leeds LS8 1UP, UNITED KINGDOM, www.bombedout.com)

MINK JAGUAR – CD

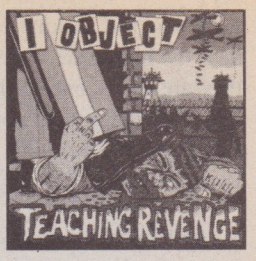
Brittle riffs, choppy guitar, punchy rhythms driven by a heartfelt tenor—yes, I do like MINK JAGUAR and I've heard scarcely a single tune. So far, so far. They're from Australia (but sing about the "Kansas City Line"). There's a breathless, busy rush to the MINK JAGUAR's music—I hear fragments, traces, ghosts of the GUN CLUB's *Fire of Love* LP here, a quarter-century after the fact and on the other side of Earth. A drug-free GUN CLUB with the tendency to break into goofball beat-bop (yikes) out of the blue, which trashes my hypothesis. Blues for the broken-spirited, when they can keep their jokier vocal tendencies in check. "Rhythm & Booze" is a fun track. (JH)
(Off the Hip, PO Box 1211, Carlton, Vic. 3053, AUSTRALIA, www.offthehip.com.au)

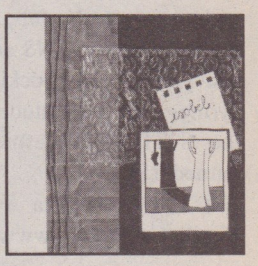
MOMENT OF YOUTH – "Sometimes..." EP

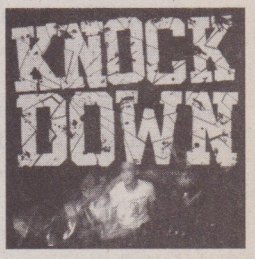
I think I got this band's first 7" for review also... I remember a distinct early-DC sound, and while these kids definitely have taken extensive notes on the *Flex Your Head* comp, this record sounds more powered by the youth crews of the late '80s or maybe even some early '90s Southern Cali sXe. In short, this has fallen into the nebulous "not really my thing" category. It's not a bad record, it just sounds generic to me. (LG)
(Firestarter, www.firestarterrecords.com)

MONEYCHANGERS – "Making Friends With..." EP

Second single from this Portland band. Fairly straightforward, snotty punk of the junkie/street trash variety. The quality of the tunes and the tasteful use of a Farfisa sounds straight outta the late '80s/early '90s era, before Rip Off hysteria or even "Budget Rock," when







trash was just fucking creepier. Although not near the high-water mark for this kinda stuff, they are easily one of the better bands doing this thing going right now. (MC)
(Moneychangers, 3011 SE 19th Ave., Portland, OR 97202

NAZI DOGS – "Chase the Man" CD

Classic sounding LA-influenced punk rock. Looking sleazy, sounding sleazy, and making me feel, well, rather sleazy. Heavy hints of the PAGANS and drug addiction run heavy; basic and rocking, drenched in that syringe-induced attitude as once perfected by the STITCHES before they crashed and burned. (SD)
(TKO, 8941 Atlanta Ave. #505, Huntington Beach, CA 92646, www.tkorecords.com)

NEGATIVE APPROACH – "Fair Warning, Vol. 1" DVD

The first in a series of DVD releases to feature old footage of Detroit's legendary NEGATIVE APPROACH. This one has three live shows plus John Brannon singing for the MISFITS as they cover "Can't Tell No One" in '83—for a total of 33 songs. Everything is taken from single-camera audience-shot video, though the audio quality is pretty good for that sort of thing. The first show, filmed in 1981, must have been one of NA's earliest, since the band is clearly a bit self-conscious on stage. It's interesting in a historical sense, I suppose, albeit not too impressive; the songs are relatively slow, the guitar and bass sound too clean and not fierce at all, and the performance lacks the energy I expect from this band. However, from the opening seconds of the next show, filmed the following year, it is as though you are watching a different group altogether. Brannon seems to have split the meantime between band practice and pumping iron at the gym—the band is tight as hell and he looks to have gained about 15 or 20 pounds of solid muscle. It is clear when you are watching a band at the top of its game—at this show, NEGATIVE APPROACH makes it seem effortless. They plow through a set of some of their best songs, including crushing versions of "Genocide" and "Fair Warning." The third show, also from '82, is similarly lively, though for the first two songs all you get is a close-up of the backs of audience members' heads until the cameraperson is able to get a better vantage point. Overall this DVD is worth it for the '82 footage alone. I'm looking forward to the next volume... (CS)
(MCRNR Video, www.motorcityrocknroll.com)

NERVOUS EXITS – "Get Out" CD

Who remembers the FIREBALLS OF FREEDOM from the late '90s? Miss 'em? Here, my friends, is their degenerate spawn, as if sons were playing with fathers on a mythical indie-punker reunion circuit. The promo sheet sez FLAMIN' GROOVIES. No. MC5 worship circa *Back in the USA*, more like. No Landau to fuck things up this time. I'm sure they get their clothes wet when they play, dunno about mine. (RW)
(Super Secret, PO Box 1585, Austin, TX 78767)

NO HOPE FOR THE KIDS – "Angels of Destruction / Cold Touch of Death"

After two years, NO HOPE FOR THE KIDS returns with their third release. If you're familiar with this Danish group, this single won't surprise you—two songs of gloomy, hook-laden melodic punk. The A-side is a reworking of their track from the *København I Ruiner* compilation; originally recorded when the band was just a three-piece, this new version features much higher production values and added dual-guitar melodies. The flip is a very MISFITS-esque cut that employs a more familiar traditional pop song structure. Both tracks are so catchy I run the risk of getting sick of hearing them after too many repeated plays. Nevertheless, this is as good anything they've done. Track it down if it's not already too late! (CS)
(Backwards Masking, no address)

NOTHING DONE – "Power Trip" CD

I suppose you could call this a discography of sorts, even though it contains their brand new full-length (and their previously released EP and demo). This is American-sounding, modern hardcore that actually hails from Holland. It has that modern flair that lifts straight from the classic era of punk. On the full-length, if you listen closely you can hear them occasionally lifting riffs straight from BLACK FLAG, but NOTHING DONE keeps things pretty fast and burly. The music on the EP and demo is generally faster than the LP, but it all rocks and I would recommend seeking out this release. (RC)
(Dead & Gone, 17 Driver Street, Sheffield, S13 9WP, UNITED KINGDOM, deadandgone.co.uk)

NOVEMBER COMING FIRE – "Dungeness" CD

I was kinda hoping they'd named their record after the crab, but no, looks like it's just the name of a place in England where they're from, and that's too bad cuz this totally sucks and the crustacean thing would've at least given me something interesting to write about. Instead I just have to report on the limp, derivative, pathetically trendy mix of metalcore styles here—take OLD MAN GLOOM, CONVERGE, and REFUSE, throw 'em in a bag, shake it up, remove all original ideas and interesting riffs, and there you go: *Dungeness*. Not the crab. (EL)
(Reflections, www.reflectionsrecords.com)

OFFICER JONES AND HIS PATROL CAR – "Memorial" LP

Tech-y, terror-filled, aggressive post-hardcore out of Belgium with great throaty, guttural vocalization over wall-of-guitar mid-tempo rockin' that falls often into chirp-and-bleep choke parts, some solid dirge jams, and an occasional awesome heavy sludge part. The seemingly obligatory crystalline clean-guitar dreamy interlude schtick doesn't appear too much on *Memorial*, although it does (but, effectively) during "Caucasian Female Delinquent," with samples (I admit, damn good ones) on the last track. This is a well-rounded and well-thought-out record; definitely a band to watch out for if you enjoy more aggressive technical hardcore. (BS)
(Mashnote, www.ojahpcp.com, offjones@hotmail.com)

PORCH MOB – "Can of Worms" CD

Reminiscent of late-'80s experimentation around the confines of hardcore by bands like JUSTICE LEAGUE and SCREAM, this Virginia band combines sturdy, upbeat hardcore with clear, sung vocals around a melodic rock core, with an effects-laden guitar sound. This has solid, diverse, and well-written tracks, and GOVERNMENT ISSUE's John Stabb lends some redneck prose to the most melodic song, which almost has a jam-band feel. Five studio and five live tracks including a cover of BAD BRAINS' "At the Movies." No lyric sheet. (KS)
(Can of Worms, www.porchmob.com)

PROUDFLESH – CD

Bay Area veteran Sothira fronts this politically-charged three-piece as they offer up more songs about peace and annihilation. This is relatively clean and mid-paced compared to the metallic crust nightmare I was expecting. While the '80s guitar wanking is kept to a minimum, the bass is high in the mix and sounds great. It's almost more of a rock record than a punk record, but that's not neccesarily a bad thing… CRUCIFIX was great, but I'm glad PROUDFLESH doesn't sound like a CRUCI-

FIX cover band… Not an awful record, but it's fairly unenergetic and the songwriting doesn't grab me. (VH)
(Wired Gnome, PO Box 572, Concord, CA 94522)

PURE HELL – "Noise Addiction" CD/DVD

Fifteen tracks from this New York punk band circa 1978. Touted as possibly the first black punk band, this quartet only had one single, *These Boots/No Rules*, if my web research is correct. Along the ways of the NEW YORK DOLLS, the STOOGES, and a bit of rockness. The DVD is a raw live set, both musically and production-wise. This collection certainly is better than the usual "one single and a bunch of live tracks" approach for these lesser-known bands. The tracks are studio recordings and the video is "Target" quality (the punk video makers not the department store). Mostly for collectors, but still a decent historical release. (RL)
(Welfare, www.welfarerecords.net)

PUT-ONS – "Schooldays in Disgrace" CD

God damn, I really like this one! It's a short ten-tracker, but these (somewhat older, judging by the inner-sleeve photos) guys manage to cram in a great distillation of late-'70s punk (think GENERATION X, BOYS, the bubblegum end of the RAMONES) and new wave (VAPORS, ELVIS COSTELLO) with songs about drugs, teen pregnancy and, er, the degeneration of American youth. They really have recaptured the sound and vibe of CBGBs in the late '70s, enhanced with some splendid LOU REED, ROLLING STONES, and CHEECH & CHONG covers. Well, actually the CHEECH & CHONG is eminently disposable, but the other nine rock. Most excellent. (RK)
(www.theputons.com)

RED STATE RIOT – CD

This band sound like one of those bands you found in the dollar bin back in the late-'80s/early-'90s—you know, some band from Ohio or Florida you never heard of again. Political hardcore with a metallic edge, decent lyrics, not bad music…just a bit "blah." (TB)
(Friendly Cow, Thumbstr. 72, D-51103, Cologne, GERMANY)

THE RETURNABLES – CD

A mix of punky power pop and UK fuzz pop. Think HOODOO GURUS and VIOLENT FEMMES mixed with WEDDING PRESENT (includes live WP cover) and the old UK bands the FRESHIES and the YACHTS. More for the old pop crowd on this spunky energetic release. Four studio tracks and three live ones. (RL)
(Dirtnap, www.dirtnaprecs.com)

ROUTINE CHECK – "Can't Bring Me Down" EP

At first listen, I really liked this record. It's straight edge hardcore, heavy on the good bits (raging thrash, good riffs), light on the shitty bits (macho youth crew choruses, predictable breakdowns), and with tough-as-fuck female vocals. Well, it turns out that the singer is a dude, which pretty much spoiled it for me. And the shit they're singing about, well it's not very "posi." As we say around here…check out these fucking lyrics! "You say you fucking care, well I don't give a shit!" or "Take that look off your face before I take it off you!" And then there's the part where they keep repeating, "These words I say, they mean the world to me." That sums up a lot of what is lame about straight-edgers—they just like to hear themselves talk about how true they are. True to what? True to being true? Well, good for you, I guess… (PC)
(Rat Patrol, 22 Mill Street, Ystrad, Rhondda, South Wales, CF41 7SQ, UNITED KINGDOM, www.ratpatrolrecords.com)

THE SAINTE CATHERINES – "Dancing for Decadence" CD

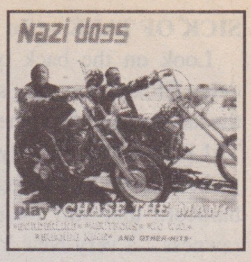
This six-piece from Montreal cranks through 12 songs of up-tempo, crunchy punk rock mixed with a poppy edge that has elements of LEATHERFACE and HOT WATER MUSIC throughout each song. The songs are well produced and the vocalist has one of those super-gruff voices that seem so popular with this musical style. Apparently there are three guitarists in this band, but to be honest nothing really stands out here that makes me think that is necessary. Overall, this doesn't really suck…but it didn't blow my doors off either. (RC)
(Fat Wreck, fatwreck.com)

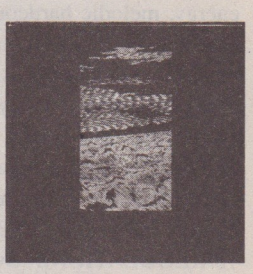
SERIAL KREEPERS – "Official Underdogs" CD

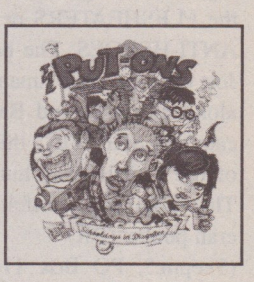
Cookie-cutter '77 punk that apparently strives for nothing more than to be Italy's answer to the STITCHES. They manage a couple of solid moves, but all in all, there isn't anything here you haven't heard (and forgotten) several times over. Pink leopard print, bad tattoo art (black cats and "13"s everywhere) and whole lot of mediocrity go into whatever it is these SERIAL KREEPERS are cooking. I've lost my appetite. (MC)
(Hellnation, Via Nomentana 113, 00161 Rome, ITALY, www.hellnation.it)

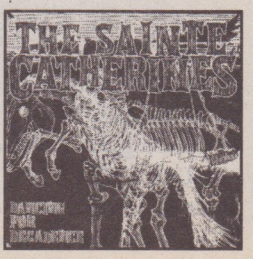
SEX PISTOLS – "Randy's Rodeo 1978" LP

Another $20 bootleg to be filed under your "Faggot Dialog Punk Ethnography" section. I haven't seen the video footage of this legendary show at Randy's Rodeo Country bar in San Antonio, but the imagery the audio creates is fairly tame stacked up against the likes of *Metallic KO*. The PISTOLS play a surprisingly good set, and although the sound quality is just as shoddy as you'd expect, the "fuck you" and "faggot" shouts from the crowd are crystal clear! If there's a reason to buy this, it's the drunk Texans not the SEX PISTOLS. After Sid attacks an audience member that hit him in the head with a beer can during "New York" the stage is silent. (I had to look this shit up on the Internet. You'd have no idea it happened listening to the record.) Lydon is as vacant as ever and can't come up with anything better to say than "Oh dear, Sid's guitar fell off… 'This song is called 'EMI.'" One drunk Texan shouts back the perfect "I don't give a fuck!" … Sending the PISTOLS to the Deep South was the best idea Malcolm McLaren ever had. We can only hope for a reunion show at the boxing ring in Bakersfield... (VH)
(bootleg, no address)









SICK OF TALK – "In Your Place" EP

Look on the back of SICK OF TALK's debut EP and you may see the front cover for the latest record from the HORROR. SICK OF TALK is in an entirely different class altogether, however, relying on thickly-recorded hardcore that still maintains an element of rawness—a very New York Hardcore kind of sound. The lyrics are loosely written, kind of amusing, and equally in-your-face—in contrast to their tight playing. A band to keep your ears open for, and quite good for the style. (SS)
(Chainsaw Safety, www.chainsawsafety.com)

SISTA SEKUNDEN – "2006" CD

Past an absolutely atrocious and boring CD cover that looks like a piece of Christmas gift wrap, Sweden's SISTA SEKUNDEN ("The Last Second") cranks 13 tracks of super high energy, melodic hardcore sung completely in Swedish (with no translation), replete with whoa-ohs and gang singalongs. Delivered with near-geeky '80s-style, shouted, undistorted vocals, this stabs in the direction of SKITKIDS-style charged delivery and musical proficiency, with great, quick guitar parts and the EPILEPTIC TERROR ATTACK/DS-13/REGULATIONS Svensk-style spin and update on classic US hardcore. Like those bands, there's more complexity, high speed, and recording definition than a straight retro-trip. (KS)
(Instigate, www.instigaterecords.com)

SKEPTIC? – "Nobody Cared" EP

This punk band has been slogging along the back roads of the southern United States for four years or more. This is sold punk played with exuberance. Barron on vocals sings in a high octave register not unlike Chris D from the FLESHEATERS or Mark Noah from the ANTI-HEROES. The band—Billy on drums, Jon on bass, and Emanuel on guitar—chugs along nicely behind Barron. The lyrics indicate that SKEPTIC? think about the meaning of life and the way humans treat each other. This is another heartfelt effort from these veteran punks. (BR)
(Skeptic?, PO Box 1144, Birmingham, AL 35201)

SMASH THE STATUES – "Against the Stream" CD

Modern chunky melodic hardcore (*a la* HOT WATER MUSIC or RISE AGAINST) patched together with tidbits of DAG NASTY, GORILLA BISCUITS, and their ilk. Actually, some of it sounds like a direct GORILLA BISCUITS rip. Pretty American sounding for a bunch of Vla-guzzling windmill dwellers, but all in all extremely well done. It might be a bit overproduced for some, but it all sounds suitably passionate and sincere. (AM)
(Angry Youth, Hertogstraat 17B, 6828 ER Arnhem, NETHERLANDS, angryyouth records@hotmail.com)

SOFAKINGDOM – "Corporation America" CD

SOFAKINGDOM are *pun*krockers from the Twin Cities, with a sound like an amalgamation of youth crew, metal-core (or is that redundant?), and DESCENDENTS-like thrash-pop, with some emo tendencies. They play well and sound hella tough, and they have their hearts in the right place politically. For the most part, anyway. More than half of the songs are anti-war/ignorance/politicians/drug laws, written from a very personal viewpoint. Another one is about abuse of food stamps, which, okay, I know there are people who spend their food stamps irresponsibly, but is that what the punks should be rallying around? Really, now… I was just about to forgive them all of their shortcomings when I got to the long, cringe-inducing intro rap/poem to their song "When Bush Comes to Shove." (PC)
(www.sofakingdom.com)

STRACONY / VIA MEDIA – split LP

Two peace-punk bands from Poland who share a guitarist here. Each band gets most of its personality and sound from the scratchy guitar sound, so they're both pretty similar. Heavily CRASS (etc.) influenced throughout, with STRACONY being a little more on the hardcore side; VIA MEDIA, a little artier. Good stuff all round. Comes in a very tasteful gatefold sleeve with translated lyric sheet. (AM)
(Trujaca Fala, PO Box 13, 81 806 Sopot 6, POLAND, www.trujacafala.com)

SWITCH-UPS – "Stuck On You" CD

Young, multi-racial street punk band from Long Beach (I think). They ably crank it out in the melodic vein of the REDUCERS SF. I really appreciate that the singer actually sings, as opposed to shouts/growls. However, the reedy voice does become a little grating. And the lyrics about girls, guys who are pussies, stomping guys who are pussies, and how they're the toughest and rule the streets are a little hard to take from such youngsters. Their next record might be really great though! (RK)
(Reality Clash, PO Box 491, Dana Point, CA 92629)

TERVEET KÄDET – "My Generation" 7"

A 13-song bootleg of a 1983 rehearsal by this classic Finnish hardcore band. Here they're caught garage-bashing material mostly from their seminal *Ääretön Joulu* 7" (one of the best hardcore records ever made). There's also a few tracks from their first EP and the *Halloween* 12" as well as a trashing of the title's classic by the WHO. This isn't made for newcomers to TK's early, scalding hardcore with paint-peeling vocals, but for the diehard fans this has decent practice-space sound quality. The delivery is lesser than some of the extensive practice sessions on the legit *Hardcore Brutality* CD issued a few years back. Rudimentary, bare bones packaging. (KS)
(bootleg, no address)

TRANZMITORS – "Look What You're Doing / Teenage Film Star"

Ah, sweet sugar to my ears. Pop, my friend, undiluted pop, and not the type ya find in your shitty *Hit Parade* or teenybopper rag…unless it was 1978. Have we found a replacement for the EXPLODING HEARTS? Let's face it, we never will, but damn it this makes their tragic passing much more easy. Hints of the STARJETS mixed in the more abrasive edge of the BOYS and the VIBRATORS. Two tracks that will drag any Sunday hangover or Monday work blues out of the doldrums. (SD)
(Cat Call/Ugly Pop, uglyxpop@yahoo.com)

TSUNAMI – "L'Ingrato" CD

TSUNAMI (no, not the Indie band of yore) delivers 14 tracks of chunky hardcore that speeds for seconds before schizophrenically changing pace and direction, stopping and restarting, throwing in a downbeat mosh part or emo-style break down, shifting to complete thrash, or taking an oddball complete 360. These convoluted and awkward transitions, and the overall attention deficit disorder attack, breaks any momentum of their otherwise great and well-played hardcore, with harsh vocals shouted in Italian. The lyrics are personal and political. This is a commendable and stunning collaborative release between *seventeen* labels throughout Italy. (KS)
(Dadadischi c/o Lucha Zanette, V.Le ai Caduti 20, 10098 Rivoli [TO], ITALY, www.dadadischi.org)

TV PARTY / VOLUNTEERS – split EP

TV PARTY, sadly, does not sound like Dezera BLACK FLAG. Instead they sound like a generic hardcore version of Dave Smalley-era DAG NASTY. They even have a line that goes "Remember how we used to be such friends /

And now it seems like you don't even care." VOLUNTEERS play personal-political thrash with monotonously yelled vocals and riffs that alternate between redundantly boring and confusingly disjointed. (PC)
(Town Clock, PO Box 132, Thirsk YO7 1WR, ENGLAND, smallsailor@another.com.uk)

THE UNCURBED FAMILY – "Welcome to Anarcho City" LP

Not quite as anthemic as their *Peace Love Punk Life* LP and still not quite the finessed chaos of *Punks on Parole*, yet still a good outing for UNCURBED. Here we have 18 ragers from everyone's favorite chaos-party-having Swedes. Holy shit! Did I just say 18? This record is too long for my tastes but I'll make an exception this time. The music is good, straight Scandi d-beat with dual vocalist screaming about all the likely subjects such as drinking, nervous breakdowns, and capitalist suckers. My copy didn't include a lyric sheet, but every other release I have by these guys has one, so it might be a *dis*-packaged copy, or maybe they figure by this point you won't need one. I like this record, don't get me wrong! It beats the shit out of just about everything else coming out now. I just have heard it before so excuse my nonchalant attitude towards reviewing it. It's worth the $10 spot for sure. Nice cover with a picture of "Dustin" featured on it. Good call! Cheers! (WK)
(Sound Pollution, www.sound-pollution.com)

UNHOLY GRAVE – "Aussie Disorder" 2xEP

Raw fukking grind slaughter recorded live in Melbourne, Australia, on a mini-disk recorder in 2004. This is one of the more shitty UNHOLY GRAVE recordings I have heard so far, but I guess that's not saying much for these guys, eh? A double 7" with all the fliers from the tour and a full tour diary in the insert. If you are an UNHOLY GRAVE fan then I doubt you give a flying fuck about the recording quality, and you would rather have this for the killer shit in the insert (which is eleven pages long!). (NE)
(Agromosh, myspace.com/agromosh)

VIBROLAS – "From Parts Unknown" CD

Metal-tinged rock with shaggy guitar leads and rhythms that scuttle like a plague of beetles—tunes like "Beerache My Eye," "Hornet Sting," and "The Ballad of Doracas Figg" hint at a stronger personality that the one evident in the music, which is fairly off-the-shelf stuff. Rocking, energetic, fun, but kinda fill-in-the-blank. I will give them credit for titling an original composition "Bitchin' Camaro." (JH)
(Eugene, PO Box 1002, Lexington, KY 40588, www.eugenerecords.com)

SONNY VINCENT – "P.I.N.S" 2xCD

I will concede to not only being a big TESTORS fan, but a fan of some of Sonny Vincent's later work as well. That said, the vast majority of the material on this double-CD relies far to heavily on hard rock guitar cliché. Sonny is at his best when going for your throat, not fanning the flames of JEFF DAHL or even ELECTRIC FRANKENSTEIN. While disc one is "P.I.N.S" proper—posing and all—disc two (billed as the rough demo disc) wins out, most notably with (you guessed it) live TESTORS reworkings from Sonny's recent tour with the ROCKET FROM THE CRYPT folks. If you are sold on the supposed legend and guest spots galore, you'll be happy. If you expect the greatness of the TESTORS, stick with what you know. (MC)
(NDN, PO Box 131471, The Woodlands, TX 77393-1471, www.ndnrecords.com)

WAKE UP CALL – "One Eye Open" CD

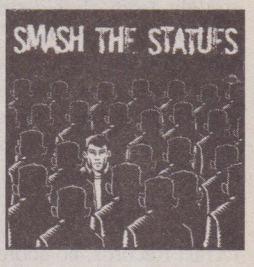
Dude. Why me? Is it because I used to work at Revelation? There's a song about the difficulties of distinguishing between friends and foes, which perhaps falls into the "you stabbed me in the back" category. ("Friends and Foes—it's hard to tell the difference / Friends and Foes—now I keep my distance.") Actually maybe it's more, "We grew apart / We used to be brothers / Sigh," than straight up "you betrayed me." There's an army of rage-filled dudes providing the obligatory mass spirit-o'-'88 back ups. Yes, kids, it's the 50th wave of Youth Crew! There are some killer riffs to which you can get your mosh on. There are *breakdowns* and a song about knowing your limits that you can totally finger-point to till you can finger-point no more. I think this would be good to work out to also—probably not as good as *Age of Quarrel*, however, which I think would be the perfect soundtrack to any sports movie. It would definitely pump you up, like the SXE version of Redbull and Vodka. The only record I truly like on Revelation is the STATUE 12" (I know, I am corny), so I have no clear idea if this is good youth crew or bad youth crew. I am going to put it in Carl Cordova's box and leave the final judgement to him. (LG)
(Think Fast!, 20230 Calice Ct., Unit 402, Estero, FL 33928)

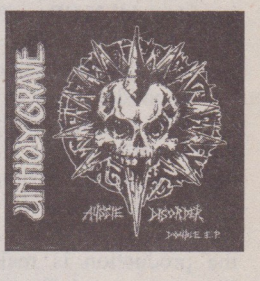
WARMED OVER BAND – CD

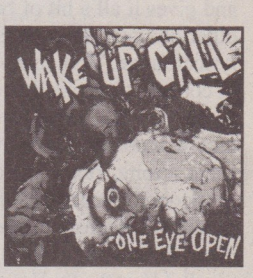
Japanese power pop…I'll take my power pop wherever I can damn well get it. Boasting ex-members of the USUALS and stating its influences as the BUZZCOCKS, the CLASH, and SUPERGRASS, one can't help but get excited. Soaked in that old '77 feel but definitely bringing something more modern to the table. Eight glorious chops of perfect punked-up pop, busy and to the point without sounding rushed, great production, and a bit of that '79 mod revival that the boys from the land of the rising sun seem to worship. An easy band to love so I won't hold back, kisses to Japan boys, big wet kisses to Japan. (SD)
(The Modernist, eric@themodernist.com)

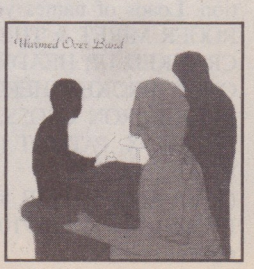
WASTELAND – "Marching as to War" EP

Anthemic and melodious jams with an assualtive power-waltz and enough fast, original punk parts to keep even the critical puke punks listening. Vocals are harsh and screamed; the timbre and style gets a little predictable, but the delivery is strong and heartfelt. Lyrics are steeped in logical disgust and personal politics that make sense (not make you vomit). I'd like to see this band play live, to make sure that their shoes are all on, but this sounds good. (BS)
(Clean Plate, PO Box 9461, North Amherst, MA 01059)









RECORDS

WHISKEY SUNDAY – "Maldecido" LP

This LP is chock full of passionate DROPKICK MUPRHYS-type melodic rock. It contains WHISKEY SUNDAY material from the summer of 2004, recorded in Oakland, California, with the band currently residing in San Jose, California. The fastest songs remind one a little bit of the DUCKY BOYS in their prime. The polished, journeyman rock 'n' roll offered here will be lost on most punk rockers. Recommended for fans of HUDSON FALCONS. (BR)
(Yo Yo, Bergstrasse 24, 74670 Sindringen, GERMANY, www.yoyorecords.de)

YOUTH OF STRENGTH – "Shouting for a Better Tomorrow" EP

As you may have already guessed from the title, this is a joke straight edge band from Boston. That's Boston, Lincolnshire, not Boston, Massachusetts. Some of the songs like "Knocking Some Sense into You," and "Shout for a Better Tomorrow" unabashedly lift riffs straight from classic straight edge bands like UNIFORM CHOICE, DYS, and MINOR THREAT. All the clichés are here, from the over-the-top rap song spoken in a cockney accent, to a fake live song entitled "Boston Edge (live)." Not as good as say GRUDGE or STAIGHT YOUTH (sic), but better than GOOD CLEAN FUN. Funny, but I hope they didn't press more than 300 of these. (CC)
(XFist Records, no address)

V/A – "Backstreets of American Oi! and Streetpunk" 2xCD

55 bands. 55 tracks. Scant information on any of them (other than the name and website), so I've no idea if any of these tracks are exclusive. On listening to this opus, a couple of things really hit me. Firstly, while the music draws on familiar territory (with obvious influences from SHAM 69 to the UK SUBS to AGNOSTIC FRONT to the BUSINESS, etc.), the production is really good these days. There's nary a duffer-produced track on here, and gives it all a bit of bollocks. Very nice. The other obvious standout is the incredibly narrow lyrical range. How many times can a man (and, of course, it's typically the lads) feel pride in his country, or his mates (or occasionally, his class and/or working for a living), rule the streets, stand strong, run wild, drink copious amounts of alcoholic beverages, never give in, and be a hooligan? Repeatedly, ad nauseam, apparently. Nevertheless, me likes this collection very much. I love the music, and it's done with a surprisingly consistent high quality on this collection. Loads of names you'll be familiar with: ROGER MIRET & THE DISASTERS, BOILS, CRANKED UP, HEADWOUND, WRETCHED ONES, BROKEN HEROES, NIBLICK HENBLANE, IRON CROSS, TOMMY GUTLESS, NY REL-X, PATRIOT (oh dear), AMERICAN STATIC, etc. (RK)
(Street Anthem, PMB #218, 1530 Locust St., Philadelphia, PA 19102, www.streetanthemrecords.com)

V/A – "The Eastpack Resistance Tour II" DVD

This DVD of a concert filmed in Belgium contains the following hardcore bands: MADBALL, IGNITE, DEATH BY STEREO, SWORN ENEMY, LENGTH OF TIME, BACKFIRE, KNUCKLEDUST, and CONVICT. The show takes place in this huge auditorium with a massive stage. Unfortunately, it makes everything seem really sterile and boring because the bands just seem out of place, and there is very little crowd interaction until the very end when MADBALL plays. The footage and sound are crystal clear, but I was totally bored watching this thing. The musical highlights for me were the MADBALL and BACKFIRE sets. Both are bands that I enjoy and MADBALL always puts on a good show. The worst part of the video was IGNITE doing a cover of "Sunday Bloody Sunday" by U2. Oh fucking Christ, it was so bad and painful to witness. Overall, I wouldn't necessarily recommend this video unless you are a huge fan of all the bands. The stale atmosphere of the show really killed it for me. (RC)
(I Scream, PO Box 46608, Los Angeles, CA 90046, iscreamrecords.com)

V/A – "Goot from the Boot" 2xCD

A nicely re-packaged and expanded reissue of this Italian punk comp from 1984. The opening band on disc one, CANI, played ass-kicking, lo-fi punk/thrash with crackling, desperate vocals. Their original comp tracks plus their entire *Guai a Voi!* EP from '83 are included here. JUGGERNAUT follows with three songs, including the awesome, driving, bouncy and melodic tune, "Everything from Near." An excellent and less-praised old Italian band, PUTRID FEVER, turns in three songs that are okay but not up to par with the rest of their great, catchy, hella punk material, which can be found on the recently re-issued CD of their discography *Do You Remember?* GREY SHADOW had a dark, new wave-y sound with a solid punk foundation, like early CURE meets early BUZZCOCKS—good shit! NOISENOISENOISE also played new wave-ish punk, but with a snottier, garage-ier attitude—good in theory, but their songs were too long and not very catchy. Disc two starts out okay, with a raw PIL-like number from MIND, then proceeds into the dark and dancey realms of bands like MONO, AIDONS LA NORVEGE, and OVERLOAD (the best of the lot, with great female vocals and keyboard hand-claps); and just plain bad '80s crap from DIVE and FUNNY FASHION. The CD booklet has original record art plus most of the lyrics and some old clippings of reviews (including a lackluster one from *MRR*'s Jeff Bale…I wonder if the review I'm writing here will appear in the re-re-issue in 20 years, creating a kind of hall-of-mirrors effect…trippy, dude…), as well as liner notes in English and Italian. (PC)
(Spittle, www.abraxasrecords.com)

V/A – "KC-DIY" LP

In most of the Midwest, DIY means a lot more than paying $2 for a Gilman card. You're lucky to find a record store that carries BLACK FLAG or make it a week without being called a faggot. Kids have a reason to be pissed... It's do it yourself because no one else fucking will. It's not only great to hear comps like this, but I'm shocked at what a solid record *KC-DIY* is. ANXIETY ATTACK channels the energy of our '80s American HC favorites as they let loose with an unrelenting assault of anger and rage on "A Disco with Books." Degenerate skate-trashers ALERT! ALERT! crank up the intensity as they rip through their explosive "Board to Death." High school sweethearts CRAP CORPS dish out the piss and vinegar with their dirty, raw, mid-tempo anthem "Put Your Mean Face On," and DICK CHENEY'S DICK unleashes some heavy-duty violence and brutality to put the nail in the coffin of this 19-track comp. Definitely a few duds on here too, but fuck man, the BBQ makes up for it. Hand screened sleeve, colored vinyl… limited to 300. Touchdown Kansas City! (VH)
($9 ppd, Big Brown Shark, 300 N Brighton Ave., Kansas City, MO 64123)

V/A – "Messthetics Greatest Hits" CD

It's great, just great, to have this handy hip-pocket condensation of the UK DIY scene that flourished in the wake of the initial 1976 punk explosion. Briefly (for the uninitiated), there was this hard-to-define "movement" in the late '70s UK punk scene that fetishized used, cheap equipment on the order of bongos, analog electric pianos, hand-made guitars, and bent saxaphones, to produce the most primitive sounding music imaginable (for the time). The sounds ranged from deranged pop to raw punk to dub-obsessed meanderings, but the dominant aesthetic would probably be a tinny guitar and a haphazard beat. Bands did most everything themselves, pressed the records up on psuedo-labels with names like Battery Operated Records and Irrelevant Wombat, and even printed their total production costs on the sleeve or the insert in a perverse race to the (cheapest) bottom…you get the idea. If they couldn't afford vinyl records, they made cassettes (the beginnings of cassette culture are here). Some great bands on here: SCROTUM POLES, PURITAN GUITARS, TRONICS, MUD HUTTERS, O LEVEL, ANOREXIA, etc. Some future Crass-label bands like ZOUNDS and POISON GIRLS moved through these circles as well, to give you an idea of the scope of this scene. The determined indie nature of it all sounds pretty "so what?" today, but the idea of putting out your own record in the '70s without asking anyone's "permission" or begging at a label's door must've felt something like the end of *V for Vendetta* when Parliament gets detonated. I think today's punk scene, with its growing tolerance of mustaches, leather vests, brief blasting guitar solos, and warbling synth, is at roughly the same level as these cats were oper-

ating on back then, if you ignore context. So everyone who's making CD-Rs of their ultra-primitive garage pop at home (or who just bought the HOME BLITZ 7"), throw this on as a tribute to Those Who Went Before. (RW)
(Hyped to Death, PO Box 351, Westminster, MA 01473)

V/A – "No Bullshit: Vol. 1" EP

7" comps are a notoriously mediocre format; I can only think of one or two great ones off the top of my head. There's *Why Are We Here?* and...uh, right. Anyway, this record features some of the best of the current crop of early '80s-style hardcore from North America—CAREER SUICIDE (Canada), STRUNG UP (Bay Area, CA), GOVERNMENT WARNING, and DIRECT CONTROL (both from Richmond, VA)—and one band from Japan I've never heard of called BAD DIRTY HATE. The CAREER SUICIDE, GOVERNMENT WARNING, and STRUNG UP songs are as good as anything any of those bands has ever done, which is to say, they're great. The BAD DIRTY HATE song is the sleeper of the bunch, because they are the least known band on the comp and their song is a total fucking fist-pumping rager; the Japanese hardcore growls stand out a bit too on a comp of bands almost exclusively influenced by early '80s US stuff. I hope this band puts out more music, and soon. The STRUNG UP songs stand out as well, 'cause their vocals are the gruffest of the bunch; I agree with comparisons I've heard likening them to OLHO SECO. If I had to choose, I'd say that my favorite song of the group is the DIRECT CONTROL song, which closes out the comp—the ascending riff in the verse makes me feel like my heart is gonna explode. It's maybe this band's best song. Anyway, this comp rules. It features a bunch of bands that are friends and that share a certain aesthetic and sound, and will serve as a nice document of popular current in today's hardcore scene. Hopefully there'll be a second pressing of *No Bullshit* because even though it only came out like, four days ago I hear that it's already out of print. Looking forward to Volume Two... (GN)
(No Way, nowayrecordhc@gmail.com)

V/A – "Punk for Life" CD

Fuck me without a rubber…please. A 40-band comp is just too much! What punk even has the time, energy, or attention span to sit through 40 tracks they actually like? From monotonously straightforward punk to hardcore to Oi, from New Jersey to the Netherlands…it's band after boring fucking band I've never heard of and never want to hear again. (VH)
(Run and Hide, PO Box 35094, Philadelphia, PA 19128)

V/A – "Release the Bats" CD

A tribute comp to the BIRTHDAY PARTY. I would say the bands that swung the heaviest influence in the late '80s and early '90s were HÜSKER DÜ, BIG BLACK, and these guys. So the usefulness of a tribute comp is up against these qualifiers: is their vocalist as interesting as the young Nick Cave, is their guitar action as compellingly creepy, is their rhythm section as locked in, and do they add anything to the songs? Well, several bands such as THE PLOT TO BLOW UP THE EIFFEL TOWER and CATTLE DECAPITATION replace the banshee blues-howl of Cave with stock gestalt-therapy screaming, so that's nowheresville right off the line there. Some bands faithfully reproduce the BP attack with, uh, tribute-band accuracy, like YEAR FUTURE doing "Blundertown," so that's…okay, I guess. Others "electro-wave" 'em up (RAH BRAS), which is a nice turn, I suppose; I would have preferred seeing SSION's NY-disco take at a bar in 1987 or so just for the fuck-you amusement factor, but in 2006…eh. For me personally, the bands that succeed are the ones that most sound like a contemporaneous band covering BIRTHDAY PARTY songs for release *at the time*, as if they intended their cover version to be on a 12" on Fetish or something, and these bands are the EX-MODELS (who sound like MARS) and LES GEORGES LENINGRAD (who sound like KARL BLAKE) and GET HUSTLE (who sound like BLURT). Your call. Oh, MELT BANANA is on this, that's gotta trigger some completist impulse out there. (RW)
(Three.One.G, PO Box 178262, San Diego, CA 92177)

V/A – "Skeletor Tapes, Vol. 1" EP

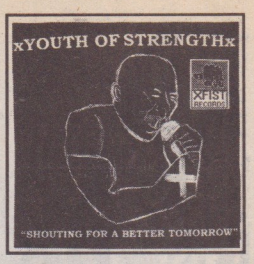
Skeletor Tapes, Vol. 1 starts off with two songs from DISROBE, who plays fast ass-core with raspy, high vocals. This shit is all over the place, man, fuckin' never stopping except to put a few punches in there. Next up is MIDGET PARADE who plays one song of noisy grind (a little more on the metal side at first) with a drum machine and tons of pitch harmonics, annoying high vocals, and really guttural lows. Last up is FJVP (FEARED JAMAICAN VODOO POSSE). The VOODOO POSSE blows yer ears out with two raw four-track recordings, the first of the two is more of a ripping d-beat song and the second is a grinder. Skeletor Tapes put a lot of work into this 7"er and make it a point to state that they are a "DIY label you fuck!" The dust sleeve is an old Chrysalis Records EP cover that has a ton of cool shit silk-screened on it. This thing is limited to 333 so act fast. Be on the look out for *Skeletor Tapes, Vol. 2* soon. (NE)
(Skeletor Tapes, 11161 S. Trumbull, Chicago, IL 60655)

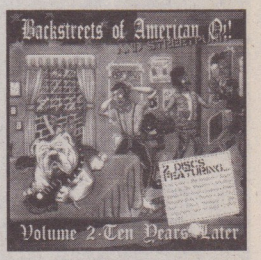
V/A – "Under the Radar Vol. 1" CD

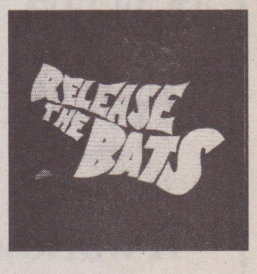
Under the Radar is an international compilation of mostly unknown bands, all somehow falling under the disturbing "horrorpunk" umbrella (or so the press release states). Apparently, "horrorpunk" consists of absolutely laughable redneck acoustic rumbling, borderline industrial Euro creepiness, or just plain metal. Although I can now check SLEEZUS FIST AND THE LATTER DAY TAINTS off of my "bands to hear" list, I honestly can't find a shred of punk rock anywhere on this release. (MC)
(Antidote, 9830 W. 53rd Place, Arvada, CO 80002, www.antidoterecords.net)

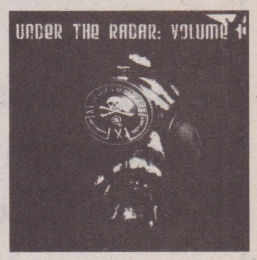
V/A – "Yoko Yoko Ensen" CD

Regional comps tend to be a bit hit-and-miss, but this one is definitely one of the better. All Japanese, four bands from Yokohama and four from Yokosuka all veering into the hardcore territory. Yokohama wins by a nose with all four bands clocking in some pretty blazing classic Japcore, with CORROSION RAID and DICK standing out. The Yokosuka bands are more varied, with PROTESTATION's blown out d-beat being the best of the bunch. I just couldn't get into EL CAMINO 53's weird choppy stuff, even though I've liked them in the past; HOLELESS and SEVEN TO THREE weren't much to write home about, but by no means bad. Worth picking up if you are any way enamored by the current crop of Japanese bands. (TB)
(MCR, 157 Kamiagu Maizuru, Kyoto 624-0913, JAPAN)









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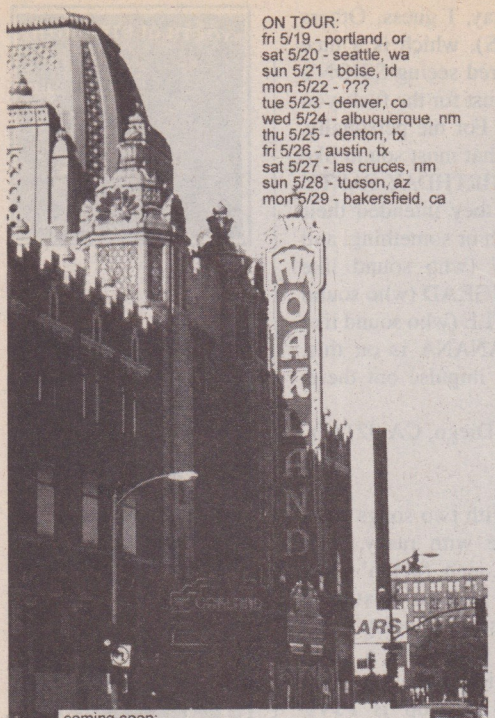

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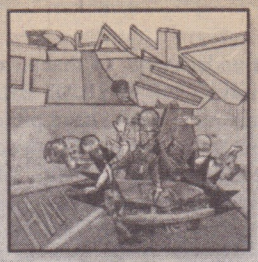

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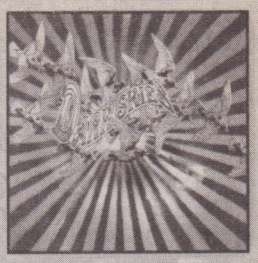

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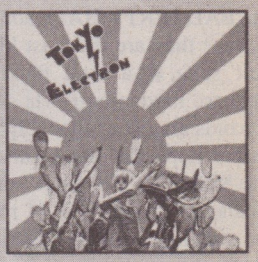

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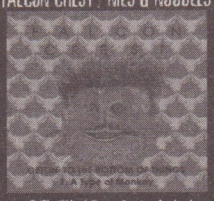

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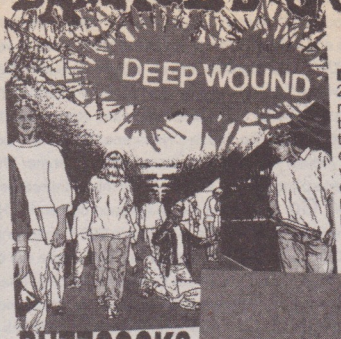

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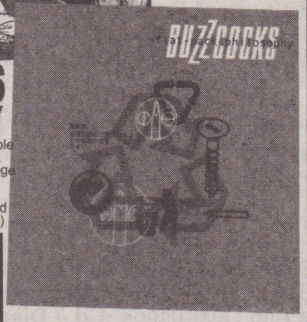

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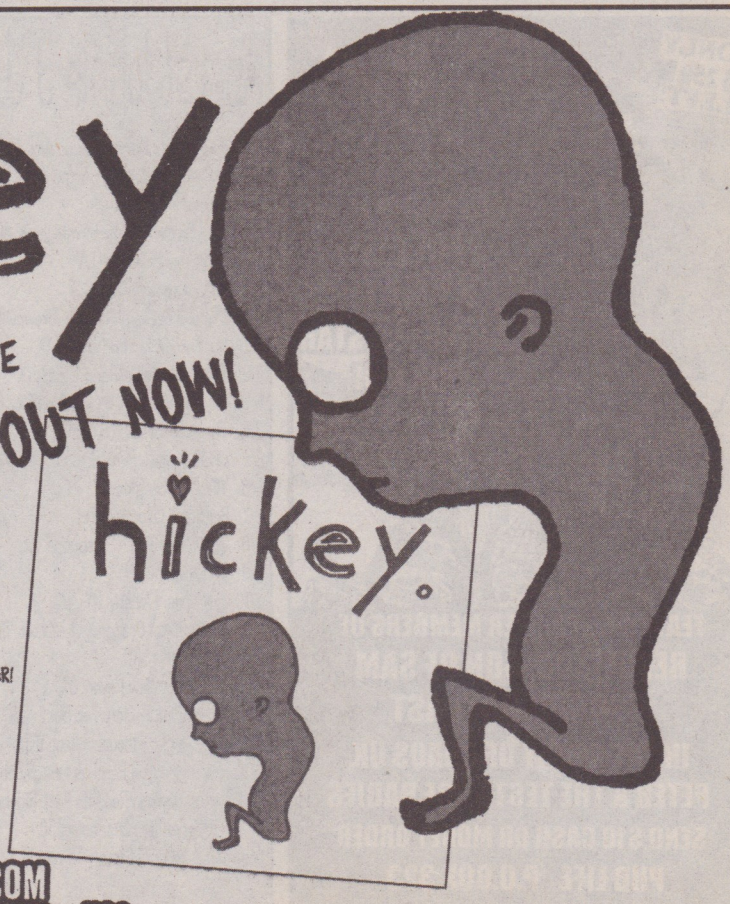

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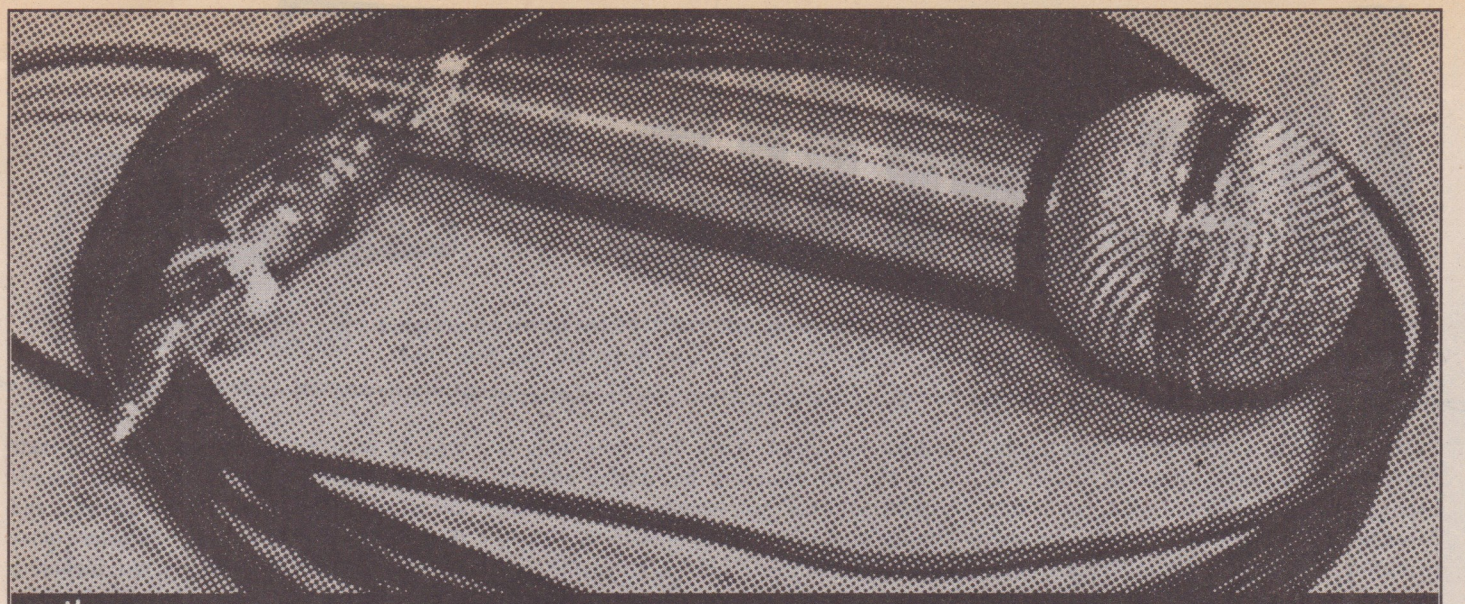

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DEMOS

Send demos and CD-Rs to: Erin Yanke, PO Box 1113, Portland, OR 97207. Please provide a postpaid price and a mailing address with your demo! Reviews by Peter Avery, Ariel Awesome, and Erin Yanke.

CANNIBAL COW plays mid-tempo, straightforward punk. Regular punk, no hyphens, makes it good and solid, but hard to describe. The vocals lead the way on this recording, while the music sounds tight underneath, with nothing too fancy going on. The vocals are yelled, and kind of sore throat-ish, but easy to understand. ($5 ppd. 7 song CD, no lyrics included. 504 E. Courtland St. Philadelphia, PA 19120.) (Erin)

CRACKHOUSE MIDWIFE sent in this, their second CD, with a note they are no more. It's a shame, especially after listening to this recording. The first song is acoustic and sloppy, but I'm sure really sweet, life-affirming sing-alongs accompanied it whenever it was played. After this song they get into it with a mix of cleanly recorded simple songs, a touch of chaos, and a bunch of catchy riffs. The vocals this time sound like a combo of the famous guy from the LEMONHEADS, and the croony moments of Axl Rose. They do covers by the DEAD BOYS, DEVO, and the ROLLING STONES. Pro-crime, pro-freaks, pro-fun, this is great. Good luck with the next band. (19 song CD, no lyrics included. 1232 Penmar Ave. SE, Roanoke, VA 24013.) (Erin)

DEAD EYE plays punk *a la* New York in the late '70s, with simple songs that are played a bit slower than my modern ears want to hear. That's how I know it's authentic! They get a bit effects-pedal-ish at times, but besides those moments it's simple, stripped down, pure punk rock. Also includes a song about the cop riot at Tompkins Square, and a cover of an IGGY POP song. Hell yeah. ($4 ppd. 5 song CD, no lyrics included. 7835 SE Martins, Portland, OR 97206.) (Erin)

DEATHCOUNT may very well be the fastest band on earth. So fast, in fact, that I'm almost convinced that there is no drummer, just some amazing drum machine (and I may be right). Their songs are filled with blast beats, metal influenced guitar riffs, and a brutal, dual vocal attack. Two screamers, one with ear piercing screeches and the other with such a deep growl that it hurts in the gut, are let loose over heavy power chords and metal style wanking, which flies over the fret board at lightning speed. When the whole thing is over I'm left somewhat bewildered and am wondering what just happened. In general, I'm the kind of man who likes to sing along with his music but I must say that this just blew me away. (10 song cassette, no lyrics. deathcountgrind@hotmail.com) (Pete)

GROSS NATIONAL PRODUCT plays short, up-tempo, sloppy, politically charged hardcore songs on their demo CD. The sound is in the vein of early '90s Bay Area hardcore, similar to QUEEN MAB. Their fast but not too fast songs use chords and progressions that portray a dark feeling but without the real heavy power of grindcore bands. The music is pretty basic and a bit sloppy, while the vocalist has a timid screaming style that takes the energy out of the songs. I'm a fan of the lyrics but the songs lack the power that the style of music demands. (12 song CD, with lyrics. 5407 N. Pershing Pl., Tampa, FL 33603, bentzsco@hotmail.com) (Pete)

HEAD ON COLISION plays thrash metal. They're fast, got those ragin' guitar solos, and the rhythm section, especially that bass drum petal, is working overtime. The vocals are gritty and well annunciated. ($2 ppd. 5 song CD, no lyrics included. PO Box 5182, St. Louis, MO 63139-0182.) (Erin)

HOGAN'S HEROES was a straightedge hardcore band back in the day—basic and fast, kind of wanky guitar solo business that seemed real metal back then, but now, what with the modern times, they just sound like guitar solos. Anyway, their demo is really a retrospective CD, and is *free* to DJs (something that will warm the hearts of all us DJs!), consisting of all their released songs, and a few unreleased ones, and some reprised and edited versions too. This also came with two bootleg live shows on DVD (which I can't review, Luddite technology problems) that are free if you email greatnesswaits@yahoo.com. (33 song CD, no lyrics included. 20 Willow Drive, Suite 5B, Ocean, NJ 07712.) (Erin)

HUMMINGBIRD OF DEATH has an explosive style, where the songs are so fucking fast and all chock-full of lyrics, crazy drumming, and everyone just going as fast as humanly possible. The songs are also more than 30 seconds long, and keeping up their level of intensity is pretty awesome. Vocals are all yelled out quick like by one guy, and then about half way through a growler comes in. They do a bunch of covers, too, including songs by INFEST, DRI, and NO COMMENT. ($3 ppd. 15 song cassette, lyrics included. 1826 N. Patricia Ave, Boise ID 83704.) (Erin)

Let's Fucking Thrash is a comp featuring thrash bands from Israel (BRUTAL ASSAULT), Belgium, (AGATHOCLES), Canada (TAKE ONE FOR THE TEAM, SHELLSHOCK), Japan (DAMAGE DIGITAL), the States (I OBJECT, DENZLAH, DEAD RADICAL, XBRANIACX), and bands that live on the Internet (CTHUWULF, HOMBRINUS DUDES, FILTHPACT, NETJAJEV SS, SAYONARA, CHAINSAW TO THE FACE). It's a good comp that covers the gamut of the thrashing pace, going beyond thrash as a genre. For instance, the double-bass grindcore is thrashable, but thrash? Not exactly. This comp goes from that grindcore, to some stop-start on a dime youth crew screamo, to general '80s thrash, and in between. Yeehaw! ($3 ppd. US / $4 world. 34 song cassette, no lyrics included. Not Very Nice Tapes, 5726 Sussix Ct., Troy, MI 48098.) (Erin)

INCOMING FIRE plays hardcore that sits on the heavier side of the crust/grind spectrum. The fast drumming and power chords mixed with heavy, metal influenced breakdowns and deep growling vocals make the band sound like a darker version of THE PIST. The band blows through the songs pretty well but the emphasis on only the deeper tones leaves the songs sounding flat. (9 song cassette, no lyrics. 501 Scottdale Ave., Scottdale, PA 15683, incoming_fire_contact@yahoo.com) (Pete)

INVASION has a cassette of simple hardcore/trash songs. The music mixes the simplicity of the early Dischord bands with the metal influence of modern thrash. The solid drumming backs up the guitar that speeds through power chords and only occasionally brakes into a solo. The vocals, which overpower the rest of the band, consist of slurred screaming with a heavy echo effect on them

that makes it sound like Sam McPheeters singing into a large, empty metal drum. (4 song cassette, some lyrics. Apdo 35322, 08029 BCN, Barcelona, Spain) (Pete)

JAN AG plays dark, slow, demonic songs. Sounds like a four-track project—all the instrumentation, growling, drones, drum machine programming, and other musical layers are done by Jan; very home-recorded sounding. There's no real movement to this, but it's probably terrifying if you take this with you to the graveyard. ($4 ppd or trade. 3 CDs with 1–3 songs on each. c/o Markie Bushmnan, 1101 5th Ave. #903, Rock Falls, IL 61071.) (Erin)

THE MEGACOOLS continue in the fine Sacramento tradition of sloppy, catchy punk rock. The contradiction here is that it's sloppy music played tight. Vocals are kind of low-level snotty on the slower songs, and shouted out on the faster ones. They also have long periods of instrumentals, sometimes with guitar experimentation over the rhythm section, and sometimes just playing a song for a long time. This was recorded live at the mighty KDVS in Davis, a great college radio station. (12-ish songs, no lyrics included. PO Box 705, Sacramento, CA 95814.) (Erin)

THE MISSING SHADOWS have a professional-quality cassette of catchy but aggressive punk tunes. Their best songs combine the hooks and pop sensibility of the BUZZCOCKS (the vocalist even sounds a bit like Pete Shelley) with a more driving street punk sound. The final song on the tape does this especially well with choppy, treble-heavy guitar and a bouncy feel to the up-tempo drumming, which could easily induce dancing. There are a couple faster, modern pop-punk-style songs that miss the mark but altogether it's a fun listen. (6 song cassette, with lyrics. Suesterstrasse 53, 49074 Osnabrueck, Germany, www.themissingshadows.de) (Pete)

NEWGATE POTENTIAL plays fast youth crew style hardcore on their demo tape. The whole sound fits into the basic mold of late '80s straightedge. Blast beats, power chords and yelled vocals are mixed with metal influenced, mosh breakdowns. The music isn't groundbreaking but the songs do have a lot of energy. Unfortunately my tape sounds like it is a third or fourth generation copy. (9 song cassette, with lyrics. Lessestraat 3, 8820 Torhout, Belgium, www.newgatepotential.be) (Pete)

PARASITESGO! plays simple punk songs that vary in their catchiness and energy level. They sound like fans of the CRAMPS, MISFITS, and other thematic punk bands. The vocals are sometimes snotty, punk and fast, sometimes slow and bare, and sometimes laden with the tone of a moan. And, as the vocals go, so the songs go. Lots of variety, and all of it pretty good. ($2 ppd. 13 song CD, no lyrics included. 99 Van Ripper Lane, Orinda CA 94563.) (Erin)

RAZOR BOIS play straightforward but pretty damn good street punk/Oi. They are "anti" the following: fascism, jocks, sexism, boneheads, cops, rednecks (wait, are there rednecks in Russia? I was unaware of this), gangsters, Nazi scum, commies, and "this" society. So really, if you fall into any of those categories, stay out of Moscow, these kids will knife you. Seriously, they don't fuck around. I wish I got to review staunchly anti-sexist Russian Oi bands every month. (7 song CD, lyrics included. givepraiserecords.com. PO Box 494, Barnstable, MA 02630) (Ariel)

READ A GODDAMN BOOK does thrash, punk rock, melodic punk, and blast beats, but still sounds like the same band no matter what genre they're working in. I think the vocal insolence ties it all together well. Palpable rage here, but also well annunciated to get the message. Good Work! ($3 ppd. 11 song cassette, lyrics included. Ken is moving back to Kalamazoo, MI, so before you order this, email him at ReadAGoddamnBook@hotmail.com.) (Erin)

REDIVIDER makes music that is instrumental but not experimental. We've got normal punk rock instrumentation here, and a more "hard" feeling without the core. With the music's ability to convey action, it sounds like it would lend itself to movies really well. We're not talking a real driving pace, though. There are also lots of samples, which tend to take the place of vocals. Maybe that's why the soundtrack idea is in my head so strongly. ($2 ppd. 6 song CD, no lyrics included. 2717 Dodson Ave., Fort Smith, AR 72901.) (Erin)

THE RESISTORS play basic, catchy punk rock. It's mid to fast tempo and guitar driven, although the vocals dominate the mix. When the lady sings, they are either sung like a bar rock band, with a pinch of JOAN JETT in there, or of a more spoken/yelled variety; and when the gentleman sings, they've got snotty punk style going on. I think it's in French too. (11 song CD, no lyrics included. 1131 E. Acacia Ave, Glendale, CA 91205.) (Erin)

RISING UP RISING DOWN plays metallic, political hardcore that sometimes ventures into the grindcore pond, but only wades there. The pacing is either loping, head-bang style, or furiously fast with guitars driving the whole thing along. The vocals are deep and angry, and shouted. Samples by luminaries like David Cross, Amy Goodman, and Noam Chomsky. (5 song CD, lyrics included. 28 Under Mountain Road Copake, NY 12516.) (Erin)

SKULL WITH WINGS at times seem to be following in the tradition of TRAGIC MULATTO and the more arty punk bands who still totally rocked it underneath the freak show. Then they play songs are just straightforward, mid-tempo punk songs that seem to be more of the Midwest emo expressive Plan-It-X scene. The vocals vary depending on the singers—sing-songy, screechy, and somewhere in the middle. Keep stretching those boundaries. (Free. 15 song cassette, no lyrics included. 86 Rice St., Cambridge, MA 02140.) (Erin)

SMASH 'N GRAB plays politically minded street punk/crust that sounds influenced by AMEBIX at times. They cover the spectrum of political issues in the usual fashion. Nothing new, but they solidly pull off the species of punk we all know pretty well by now. Not bad. ($5 ppd. 8 song CD, lyrics included. PO Box 1239 Strawberry Hills, NSW 2010 Australia.) (Ariel)

THINK FAST plays thrash lo-fi punk rock—classic! No frills and no nonsense, they just play and rock it. The vocals are more spoken than sung, and shouted when the pace increases. "Phoenix is neat" has group backup vocals that call for audience participation. (5 song CD, lyrics included. 2402 E. Dahlia Dr., Phoenix, AZ 85032.) (Erin)

TIALA plays a forceful and dynamic brand of hardcore, with desperately wavering screaming vocals that make you cringe. The disjointed rhythm and trebly guitars remind me of CRIMSON CURSE. It's good if you miss that recent era of hardcore. (2 song cassette, no lyrics included. chronocological@yahoo.com) (Ariel)

TRYSTERO plays long, involved instrumentals that convey a wide range of moods. Thinking of instrumentals mostly as soundtrack stuff, you have the "wild kid energetic montage scene" song, the "introspective alone in your room on your mattress reading old letters" song, and a bunch in between. Well done, with regular instrumentation, a complex rhythm section, and a cello. ($6 ppd. 5 song CD, no lyrics [duh]. 26 Richmand Ave., Buffalo, NY 14222.) (Erin)

UNDER AL KRITIK plays charming early-'80s influenced hardcore punk. It's all in Danish, but if I had to make an educated guess as to what they are singing about it would be people they hate, and why society is so fucked—just a guess. Really catchy, charging punk parts are accented with these great, blasting fast parts. Lo-fi recording and ultra-short songs (average about a minute) totally increase the enjoyability of this demo. Highly recommended. (8 song CD, lyrics included. underalkritik@gmail.com) (Ariel)

BLÖÖDHAG

HELL BENT FOR LETTERS

A communion between literacy and punk/metal, BLÖÖDHAG created the genre of Edu-core and operate under the motto "The faster you go deaf, the more time you have to read." Minute-long songs about Science Fiction authors are punctuated by book-peltings and lectures, with BLÖÖDHAG touring both clubs and public libraries! Read or bleed people!

DISASTER STRIKES

Disaster Strikes have crafted their own unique brand of punk and hardcore since their formation in 1999. Singer J.R.'s life experience as a full-time union organizer infuses the lyrics - comparable to lyrics by Jello Biafra or MDC at their height - with truth and political edge that can't be bought at Hot Topic.

FISH KARMA

FISH KARMA's songs feature unique skewerings of the dark side of Americana. Basement rock from Texas via Arizona: kind of outsider, kind of blind-sider, with a barb or two at supply-siders, FISH KARMA's in the tent to enlighten and mangle your mind.

PilotScottTracy

We Cut Loose

OUT IN JUNE 2006

FLESHIES

SCRAPE THE WALLS

The return of the Fleshies on record is a spirited 17-song epic out to molest punk rock the same way that Sparks unwholesomely molested glitter rock, the Melvins mauled rock, or the Butthole Surfers maimed music in general (the album even includes a cover of Sparks' "Happy Hunting Ground" with Jello Biafra). Scrape the Walls bounces everywhere from somewhat sunny-dispositioned pseudo anthems to sludgy, stoner rock-esque castings, all glazed with Fleshies' inimitable sense of fuck-you humor.

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Combining a furious garage punk assault with an uncompromising and literal devotion to the Holy Bible, the Knights of the New Crusade are without a doubt the most divisive band in both the Christian and punk rock circles. Has Jello's taste for the extreme gone off the deep end? Or is this the most diabolical concept band since.....?

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ZINES

Reviews by: Aragorn (AR), Heather Blotto (HB), Paul Curran (PC), Mikel Delgado (MD), Layla Gibbon (LG), Harald Hartmann (HH), Nick Mangel (NM), Jeff Mason (JM), Golnar Nikpour (GN), Casey Ress (CR), Andy Shoup (AS), Thera Webb (TW).

Send zines for review to: MRR, PO Box 460760, San Francisco, CA 94146. Please include the following info on a separate piece of paper with your zine: postpaid price, international price, do you take trades?, size, copied or printed?, number of pages, language, mailing address, website address, email address.

A MURDER OF CROWS #1 / $2
8 x 11 – printed – 40 pgs
A compilation of pieces about resistance and solidarity, small and large moments of insurrection within the context of the Anarchist movement. Despite getting an Anarcho zine to review pretty much every month, I still feel kind of out of my element in critiquing them in that I am not well versed in the minutiae of political theory. This zine is less about theory and more about direct action and worldwide resistance, with articles covering Argentina, barbaric immigration detention centers in Italy, and the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. (LG)
PO Box 20442 / Seattle, WA 98012

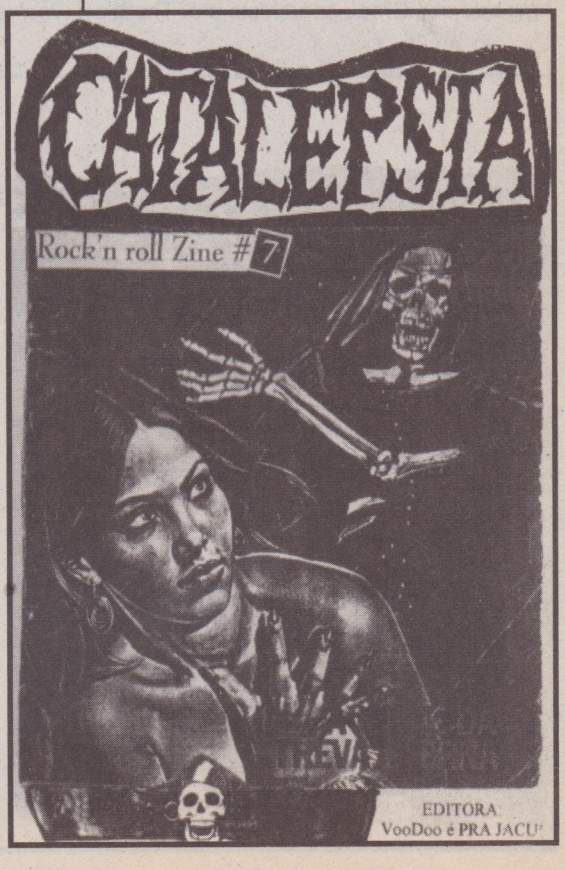
BALD CACTUS #24 / $1?
8.5 x 5.5 – copied – 28 pgs
Awesome long-running DIY punk zine from the UK, which I always try to pick up when I can. There isn't a lot of magic to it—reviews, interviews, some writings, and updates on DIY hardcore punk happenings—but it is done well, with consistency and humor, and is the perfect balance of things I look for in a punk "music" zine. There are not enough zines like this around anymore!! OK, I will gather myself. This issue has interviews with the Abrasive Wheels (!), the Dauntless Elite, and the Restarts. Get it! (NM)
145-149 Cardigan Road / Leeds, W. Yorks / LS6 1LJ / England

CATALEPSIA #7 / ?
5.5 x 8.5 – copied – 16 pgs – Portugese
Love psychobilly? Speak Portugese? Then this is the zine you've been waiting for! An interview with the Brown Vampire Cats, an article about the Meteors, a whoping *three records* reviews (including, yes, the Meteors!), and some stolen clippings, such as a magazine piece about *Satanic Bible* author Howard Stanton Levey. What more could you possibly want? (PC)
Marcelo / R. Matathias Nogueira / Nojaes, 775 / Mogi das Cruzes SP / 08743-480 / Brazil
catalepsiazine@yahoo.com.br

FAT IS BEAUTIFUL / ?
5.5 x 8.5 – copied – 48 pgs
A totally excellent resource on fat acceptance, sizism, the myth of skinny-as-healthy, body image, fat politics, etc. These are topics that we rarely discuss in "the scene" and if you read this zine I think will agree that this is a travesty. This zine tackles the challenging topic how we talk about fat, the terminology we use, our inherent prejudices, and it gets you thinking about the subject from different angles. Obviously, anyone who is, or knows someone who is fat, or has been called fat, overweight, or obese, will find something that they can relate to in this, but just as importantly, I think people who have never thought very much about these issues will find this very enlightening. This looks like it may be a one-off, but I hope it continues on. (PC)
Crystal Hartman / 301 N. 5th St. / Columbia, MO 65201-4309
crystal_hartman@hotmail.com

FIFTH GRADE #? / 3 stamps or trade
5.5 x 4 – copied – 43 pgs
Odd little per-zine here, mostly portraits of people the author knew in childhood, interspersed with some writing about the same. For those of the awkward/emo ilk. (NM)
2622 Princeton Road / Cleveland Heights, OH 44118
www.lovebunnipress.com

FLAKES #4 / $1 or 3 stamps
8.5 x 11 – copied – 10 pgs
Another offering from the Fanorama Society, a one-man publisher and distributor of numerous prisoner zines. Flakes is basically just a bunch of xeroxed pages out of the notebook of one Darren Hamby. Short pieces about crimes, booze, drugs, odd memories...nothing that really goes anywhere or has a point. One item called "Cell Extractions, the Guards and Segregated Life" gives some insight into day-to-day prison life that I found interesting and informative. I'd like to see more stuff like that in prisoners' zines, but I imagine that if you were locked up, that might be the last thing you want to think and write about. Alas... (PC)
Fanorama Society / 109 Arnold Ave. / Cranston, RI 02905
fanorama1@aol.com



ZINES

THE GOSPEL OF SCREENPRINTING #1 / $6
5.5 x 8.5 – copied – 28 pgs
Anyone who has gotten involved in the art of screenprinting has undoubtedly run into problems in techniques and application. Fucking up a screen and having to start all over again is a time consuming and frustrating experience. The idea of a well put together, informative guide definitely appealed to me, and *The Gospel of Screenprinting* is certainly well put together and informative. Design-wise it's a hit, with a very nicely hand-screened cover and illustrations. Beyond the basic advice for exposing and printing, *The Gospel* includes instructions on selecting screen materials, and building an exposure lamp and a vacuum table. Someone entering the world of screenprinting will get a lot of mileage out of this zine. If you're a novice or have some practice, it might not be quite as instructive, especially at the price of $6. (CR)
617 E 49th St. / Savannah, GA 31405
brad@tenfortyfivepress.com

GREEN ANARCHY #22 / $4
8.5 x 10.5– printed – 80 pgs
The "Technology Issue." There's a lot of cool stuff in here, even if you're not a green anarchist or primitivist, especially some great reports on actions and events (anti-capitalist and anti-state activities, and symptoms of the system's meltdown) across the globe, with a special section on how bad-ass Greek anarchists are. There's a kind of weird article about how feminists should stop relying on technology because it makes them more like men or something (actually, the article is pretty good and raises some points I hadn't given much though to) and a bevvy of other interesting articles including one about the recent "Green Scare" and the ALF/ELF arrests. Good, informative, inspiring stuff that isn't boring to read. (TW)
PO Box 11311 / Eugene, OR 97440
collective@greenanarchy.org /
www.greenanarchy.org

HIGH HEELS SLUT #9 / $3 or 3€ world
5.75 x 8.25 – copied – 60pgs
I hate the name and the back cover illustration of a chick in her underwear showing off her ass. Her tattoo says "punk," but it ain't—it's just the same played-out, typical shit I see on every other advertisement in the world. Opening the zine makes it a lot better. Retard Wim's enthusiasm for wild punk rock 'n' roll is clearly evident, and he packs hella interviews and reviews inside. The bands are: the Dissimilars, Digger & the Pussycats, Heartattacks, the Pillz, the Guilty Hearts, and the Mexican Blackbirds. Three European rock 'n' roll zines and an old Belgian punk are interviewed as well. The reviews include a million records, a few fanzines, and the Czech Antifest. Overall the quality (including the photos) is better than average. Make your own cover and you've got a pretty good zine here. (JM)
c/o Retard Wim / Oude Tramweg 50 / 8560 Moorsele / Belgium
cottenier.wim@yucom.be

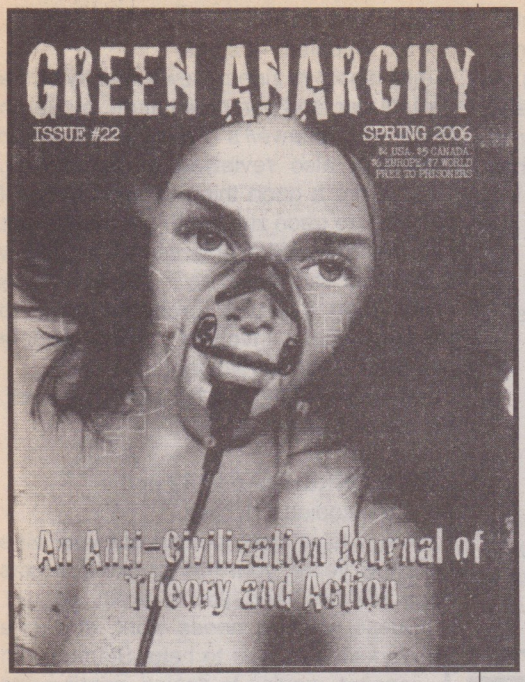
THE INNER SWINE Vol. 12, # 1 / $2
5.5 x 8.5 – printed – 64 pgs
You should read this zine if you would like to hear relatively funny stories about drinking, but don't feel like leaving the house to track down your favorite boozehound friends, who might be past the funny drunk stage by this late hour anyway. If you're into reading about Whiskeyfest 2005 and some other drink related things, you should get this zine. Although that would entail leaving your house. Maybe you should just go to their website instead. (TW)
Jeff Somers / PO Box 3024 / Hoboken, NJ 07030
mreditor@innerswine.com /
www.innerswine.com

THE INSURGENT #17.3 / $15 for a year's sub, free to prisoners
11 x 17 – printed – 28 pgs
This paper will primarily appeal to those who can read it for free, such as people in jail and students on the campus where it's published. There are plenty of news briefs scattered throughout, giving you more details on shit you already knew was fucked, updating you on animal liberation raids, etc. Some of it is straight from kids' school papers, especially the Situationist-influened material. There's a pretty sweet book review attacking Alan Dershowitz's pro-Israel bullshit. An ex-punk is praised for supporting US troops, a sensible direction, as "the final destination of punk rock is Sid Vicious and the grave." There is a lot to read here, but for the most part I could get by without reading it. (JM)
UO Student Insurgent / Suite One / 1228 University of Oregon / Erb Memorial Union / University of Oregon / Eugene, OR 97403
sialtmedia@hotmail.com

LOSERDOM #14 / $4
5.75 x 8.25 – copied – 60 pgs
Loserdom succeeds in being a pretty interesting zine with personal aspects, without falling into the land of zines that involve printing out a page of my livejournal, folding it in half and mailing it to you. There's a cool recounting of a bike trip through western Ireland, a really nicely illustrated piece on why biking in Dublin is so dangerous, an article on anti-war stuff, and a great interview with early Irish zine writer PA who did *A New Clear Threat* from 1981 – 1985. I'm into it. (TW)
Anto / 9 Barron Place / Drumcondra / Dublin 9 / Ireland
punkcyclist@dublin.ie

MENACE #8/9 / $1 or trade
8.5 x 5.5 – copied – 44 pgs
To the misfortune of zine-dom, I seem to be getting all the per-zines lately. They aren't my forte, let's just say. Anyhoo, *Menace* is styled after many of the '90s per-zines with which we are all familiar. #8 has a format more centered on *Cometbus*-type stuff (location-based), and #9 is more topic-based; I think the latter is a preferable way of organizing the writing. (NM)
37 Mulberry Street / Asheville, NC 28804

MODERN ARIZONA #8.5 / $1 US, $2 world or trade
4.5 x 5.5 – copied – 32 pgs
Joe threw this thing together in between bigger issues, and it's mostly anecdotes. Some of them are funny or good, but the setup can be a little long for the payoff.



Among other tales, he tells of venturing into the ocean during a hurricane (this is actually quite dangerous) and the rounds a disgusting videocassette made in his community. In person it's a quarter, and I would buy one for sure, but otherwise I'd hold off unless you're already a fan of his writing. (JM)
Joe Unseen / PO Box 494 / Brewster, NY 10509
unseen@bestweb.net

MOVE YOUR ASS #12 / $3
8 x 11 – printed – 48 pgs – Czech
This fanzine has a similar lay out to *MRR*. There are columns, scene reports, interviews, lots of cool ads, and some record reviews. The bands featured in this issue include the Unseen, Born/Dead, and Za Vraty. If you are into punk, crust, ska, or hardcore and want to know more about the Czech scene there is no place better to start than with a copy of this *Move Your Ass*. (HH)
Jan Kovar / PO Box 18 / 463 31 Chrastava / Czech Republic
email:moveyourass@seznam.cz

PUBLICK OCCURANCES #5 / $1 or stamps
4.25 x 5.5 – copied – 24 pgs
Danny does drawings of yearbook photos, doing a different year for each issue of his zine. Each page has four "photos" and nothing else; the faces tell the story. The style could be described as a cross between Ralph Steadman and Cristy Road—people look somewhat realistic and completely bizarre at the same time. A simple concept done amazingly well by a talented artist. He'll send you fun extra bits like stickers too! (PC)
Danny Martin / 3407 E. Camden #1 / Tucson, AZ 85716

RAUMSCHIFF WUCHERPREIS! #18 / $4.00
8 x 11 – printed – 56 pgs – German
This fanzine serves mostly as a mailorder catalogue, but includes lots of punk information for those into the German scene. There is an interview with the band Warfare and a really cool article on cheap vacations in other people's misery (meaning going to a country where people live in poverty). And of course there is the Wucher News about what is happening in the world of German and international punk. Finally, this issue comes with a fourteen-page insert of new record reviews. (HH)
Scumfuck / Postfach 100709 / 46527 Dinslaken / Germany

RAZORCAKE #31 / $4
8.5 x 11 – printed – 116 pgs
Doubtless, there are people who think it's fucking hilarious to make jokes about babies sucking on "boobs," but since I'm (thankfully) not one of them, *Razorcake* was already striking out on page one (even if the baby in question was pretty cute and not too alien-looking). I was into the article on *Repo Man* and Emilio Estevez, and the interviews with bands like Dead Moon, Regulations, Hellbillys, Guilty Hearts, etc. Sadly, the rest of the magazine was pretty much just made up of articles on things like "Punk Bowling in Vegas!" and some reviewer lamenting that the superhero comic by James Kochalka has heroes who "come off as gay" and only has "two chicks" in it, even if one is in a shower scene. But, I suppose if you already like *Razorcake*, it won't really matter to you how lame I think it is. (TW)
PO Box 42129 / Los Angeles, CA 90042
www.razorcake.com

RENFIELD #145 / $3
6 x 8 – copied – 40 pgs – German
I usually fall over backwards to give anything from Berlin a good review, and this issue of *Renfield* will not be different. Mostly the fanzine concentrates on Eastern Europe with scene reports from Finland, Russia, Estland (*wie heisst in englisch*?) and Hungry. There is a really cool tour map of the band Sceptic Jazz's gigs in the Baltic States. Their twelve-song CD that came with this issue of the fanzine was OK with a couple of catchy songs. Probably had to see the band on tour to really appreciate this CD. Besides that, there is an interview with Psycho Terror and a scene report from Leipzig. (HH)
Tim Kegler / Schoenhauser Allee 74a / 10437 Berlin / Germany
www.renfield-fanzine@hotmail.de

SOLITARY EXISTENCE #4 / $5 or 13 stamps
8.5 x 11 - copied – 52 pgs
This is published by Fanorama Society Press, which apparently publishes zines by folks in prison. That may be the case, but $5 or 13 (!) stamps is pretty absurd. Before I saw that this was done by a prisoner I was going to say that this reminded me a lot of zines I did when I was 13. Maybe they're sending 'em to the clink earlier now or something. All the symptoms of juvenile "creativity" are there; in other words, it's a chaotic hodgepodge of miscellany—writings on life, some random art, bad poetry, pictures from magazines (??), etc. (NM)
Fanorama Society / 109 Arnold Avenue / Cranston, RI 02905

TAZEWELL'S FAVORITE ECCENTRIC #3 / $1 plus stamp
3 x 5.5 – copied – 22 pgs
The last issue, which I reviewed last month's *MRR*, was kind of whimsical whereas this issue is pretty intense. Her writing is very personable, like a conversation with someone you only talk to every so

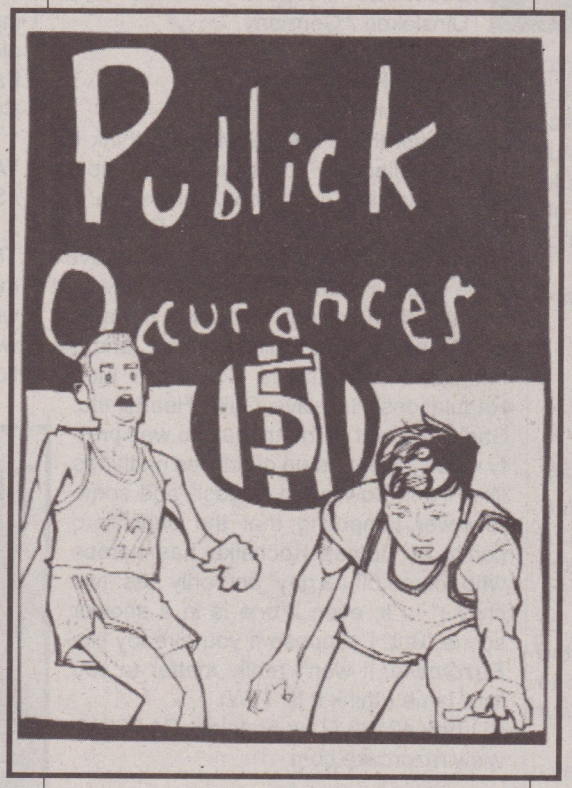
often but when you do you always talk for hours. She writes about her family, her hometown, being queer and resisting silence and invisibility, wage slavery, and class. I like it when people can write about things that have become zine clichés but make them seem relevant and true. I imagine she would make a good penpal if you were into that sort of thing. (LG)
Sarah Rose / PO Box 816 / North Tazewell, VA 24630

TOTAL DESTRUCTION #1 / $2
8.5 x 11 – copied – 10 pgs
Putting the *hard* back into hardcore, *Total Destruction* shifts the focus from bands, shows, and reviews that make up the majority of the content of HC zines to politics, animal liberation, and prisoner support. The inaugural issue includes updates on arrests and imprisonment of suspects in ELF actions, updates on direct action events worldwide, and essays on extremism and liberation. *Total Destruction* succeeds in its ability to merge the enthusiasm and energy of hardcore with the dedication and passion of its politics. (CR)
Liberation Projects / 838 E. High St. #115 / Lexington, KY 40502
Vegan.straightedge@yahoo.com

TRUST #116 / $5
8 x 11 – printed – 68 pgs – German
It must be springtime in Germany as *Trust* puts out its Spring issue entitled "Sex and Music." There are some really interesting articles about love and sex in this issue, including one from *MRR*'s own Mykel Board. Also included in this love-fest are rants by Ingrid Strobel, Archi Alert, Klaus Frick, and Armin Hoffman. There is an in-depth interview with Citizen B, including some interesting graphics. There are articles on Riot Grrrls, Ladyfest Berlin; a really interesting Fuck For Forest interview, and a sexy double-page *Playboy*-type photo proving *Trust* is the sexiest thing around. Finally, there are loads of new record reviews and other tidbits of useless punk rock info. Definitely a great read! (HH)
Dolf Hermannstaedter / Postfach 110762 / 28087 Bremen / Germany
www.trust-zine.de

TURNING THE TIDE vol. 19, #2 / $16 for 6 issues
11 x 17 – printed – 8 pgs
This paper seems to have fallen on hard times. It's thinner and prints Leninist press releases. One guy is "a radiant leader...a bold warrior, a ghetto hero..." Another lady reminds us "[t]he Party line is what counts." There's some more reasonable material, such as discussions of the decreasing oil supply and its effects on racism and domestic politics, and an editorial decrying martial law in the Phillipines. The editor has two pieces, one softening some of the Maoist's positions (not soft enough for my tastes—"remember Krondstadt," that's my party line) and another giving some tips for long-term strategies for resistance. This is not such a great issue. (JM)
PO Box 1055 / Culver City, CA 90232
antiracistaction_la@yahoo.com

UNBRIDLED TISSUE #4 / $?
5.5 x 8 – copied – 36 pgs
The layout on this zine is ugly; normally that does not matter to me at all, but this was kind of ridiculous. It looks like a planner for a weeklong conference at the Holiday Inn. Bring back cut 'n' paste! The writing itself is sharp and funny in a black humor style; there are interviews with Avulsion and Vuur, and articles on wide-ranging subjects from the psychology of child soldiers to the use of rubber bullets against protestors. That makes it sound like heavier reading that it was, but the writer's inherent sarcasm and perceptiveness make it a fun and interesting read. (LG)
Tim K Rombouts / Weg naar As 135 / 3660 Opglabbeek / Belgium
crapforthekids@hotmail.com



ZINETOPIA #0 / $1
3 x 5.5 – copied – 22 pgs
A mini-digest of zine reviews, mostly of the grrrl, queer, and personal nature, by Sarah Rose of *Tazewell's Favorite Eccenrtic* (which is also reviewed in this issue). Seems like a good thing to send off for if you want to trade zines with people and are into per-zines. She only seems to review things that she loves, so if you are of this world then you will probably want to read/write/get involved with people reviewed within *Zinetopia.* (LG)
Sarah Rose / PO Box 816 / North Tazewell, VA 24630

ZINE WORKSHOP #1 / $2 ppd
7 x 8.5 – copied – 16 pgs
I know, you've been putting out your zine for a few years, your friends like it, it gets good reviews, and you're pretty stoked. Guess what…it needs work, and *Zine Workshop* is here to help. Starting with concept, moving to design, printing and pricing, almost any zine publisher will glean something from within these pages, no matter how practiced you are. Beyond the illustrated helpful hints are contacts for reviews, distributors, zine events, and online zine communities. *Zine Workshop,* a publication of the Independent Publishing Resource Center in Portland, Oregon, deserves a place on your desk between your saddle stapler and your collection of *Cometbus* issues. (CR)
Independent Publishing Resource Center / 917 SW Oak St. #218 / Portland, OR / 97205

ZOOM DOOM #2 and #3 / trade
8 x 6 – copied – 28 pgs – Russian
Now that America has liberated humanity and punk has become glossy, we here in San Francisco forget there are places in the world where punk still means living on the edge. These two small issues of *Zoom Doom* come from a country which America and Western Europe label as unfree and to be boycotted. I speak of Belarus. Anyway, it is obvious a lot of love has gone into making these cool fanzines, especially the artwork. There are a couple of short articles and some record listings. There are two band interviews, but mostly this fanzine is about drawings and graphics and short written comments. I liked them and thought the postcards were really cool. I say fuck isolating Belarus, check out these fanzines from behind America's wall of ignorance. (HH)
Green Igorkonyk / PO B 205 / Minsk 220107 / Belarus

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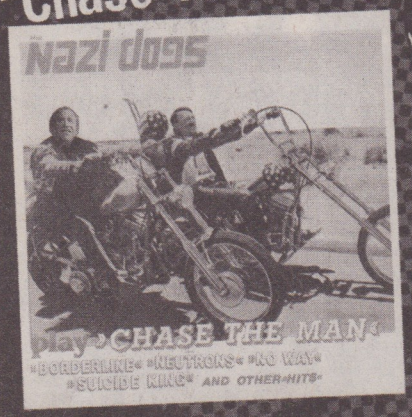

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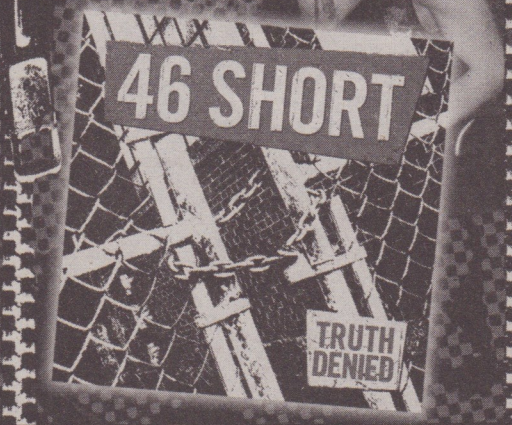

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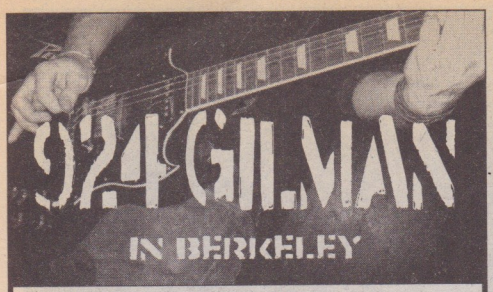

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MOUTH SEWN SHUT (MA) OPPRESSED LOGIC
NOTHING IN RETURN

Sunday 14 • 5pm • $5
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GUN POWDER

Friday 19 $6
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INSTANT ASSHOLE • GOOD NEIGHBOR POLICY
PARASITES GO • THE RUNNS

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Saturday 3 • $5
THE HELM (WA) • ROBOT EYES (OR)

Sunday 4 • 5pm • $7
VERSE (RI) • CRIME IN STEREO (NY)
GUNS UP (MA) • DRUGS OF YOUTH

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TOYS THAT KILL (L.A.) • KREAMY 'LECTRIC SANTA
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CLASSIFIEDS

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